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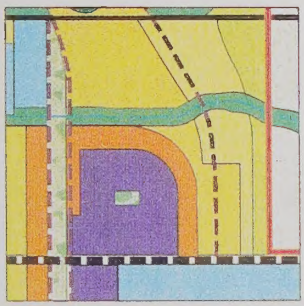

GENERAL PLAN

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ADOPTED
JULY 2000

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2001 0171

City of Rohnert Park
GENERAL PLAN

Prepared by

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

ADOPTED
JULY 2000

(SECOND EDITION)

LOG OF AMENDMENTS TO THE JULY 2000 ADOPTED ROHNERT PARK GENERAL PLAN

Listed below is the log of all adopted General Plan amendments and text corrections occurring since the publishing of the first edition of the Rohnert Park General Plan adopted on July 25, 2000 (City Council Resolution No. 2000-152). The amendments are listed in sequence according to the date of the amendment or the correction.

2000

11/7/2000

Description: Amendments to the General Plan based on the adoption of Measure N (2000), Urban Growth Boundary

(1) Text revisions to Chapter 2, Land Use and Growth Management, to amend the policies (Policies GM-2 and LU-34) and land use definitions (addition of the definition of "20 Year Urban Growth Boundary") of the Land Use and Growth Management Elements to conform to the provisions of Measure N.

(2) Map revision to Figure 2.2-1, General Plan Diagram, to add the term "20 Year Urban Growth Boundary" to the map legend.

11/7/2000

Description: Technical corrections.

(1) Map revisions to Figures 3.1-1 (Three-Dimensional View of Ridgelines) and 3.1-2 (Urban Form and Structure) to add in the notch area located in the Northeast Specific Plan area; this amendment was approved by the City Council in Resolution No. 2000-152 but not all figures were corrected in the first printing.

(2) Table revisions to Tables 2.4-1 (Land Use Program: University District Specific Plan Area), 2.4-3 (Land Use Program: Southeast Specific Plan Area), 2.4-4 (Land Use Program: Northeast Specific Plan Area), and 9.4-2 Potential Residential Development – Growth Areas to correct the totals and to make tables consistent.

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Joe Gaffney, City Engineer*
Betsy Strauss, City Attorney*
William Stephens, Public Works Manager
Tim Barry, Recreation Director
Patrick Rooney, Public Safety Director
Bob Cassel, Fire Services Commander
Rebecca Jones, Administrative Assistant to the City Manager*

Planning Consultants

Vicki Hill, General Plan Project Coordinator*
Rick Brown, General Plan Facilitator*
Rajeev Bhatia, General Plan Consultant Lead*

* *General Plan Ad Hoc Oversight Committee*

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1 Introduction and Overview

1.1 ROHNERT PARK: A CAPSULE HISTORY

Rohnert Park was founded as a master-planned community on the former site of the Rohnert Seed Farm, located along the Northwestern Pacific railroad right-of-way. The original 1954 master plan was based on the "neighborhood unit" concept of clustering single-family homes around local schools and parks. The master plan featured eight neighborhoods, each with 200 to 250 homes, a 10-acre school, and a five-acre park.

In 1956, the Rohnert Park Community Services District was founded, and work began on digging wells, building a sewage plant, and installing water lines, sewer lines, and streets. By 1957, the first homes had been constructed. At the same time, the segment of US 101 from Petaluma north past Cotati was completed, making Rohnert Park more easily accessible from points throughout the region. Also, the California Legislature approved funds for Sonoma State University (SSU), which was located within Rohnert Park until moving to its current site in 1966, initiating the City's long relationship with the University.

In 1962, at the time of incorporation, Rohnert Park had a population of 2,775, and the City limits encompassed 1,325 acres (approximately 2.1 square miles). The city grew quickly as the Bay Area economy continued to grow, and the demand for housing exploded. By 1980, urban uses extended from US 101 in the west to Snyder Lane in the east.

The 1980s saw growth extend west of US 101; "G" section, east of Snyder Lane, was built in this period. Growth in the 1990s was slower because of limited availability of vacant land within the City limits. In 1999, the city had a population of about 41,000 and an area of nearly 4,400 acres (6.9 square miles), with nearly half the land dedicated to residential uses. Figure 1.1-1 shows the evolution of Rohnert Park from 1965 to 1999.

In conjunction with residential growth, Rohnert Park also attracted commercial and industrial development and acquired a sizeable job base of almost 22,000 employees by 1999. Commercial and industrial uses are concentrated west of the railroad tracks and north of Copeland Creek. Major employers include Hewlett-Packard, located within an industrial campus in the southeast corner of the city, State Farm Insurance, and SSU. The Double Tree Hotel, Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course, and the Sonoma County Wineries Association make Rohnert Park a popular hospitality center.

Rohnert Park's limited Sphere of Influence (SOI) includes the Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan area (24 acres in size; plans for which were developed in 1999) and Canon Manor, where further development is hindered by the need for public facility improvements and the ongoing debate about how to fund the improvements. SSU is located outside the City's SOI.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The Rohnert Park General Plan is a document required by State law and adopted by the City Council that addresses issues related to physical development, growth, and conservation of City resources. It:

- Outlines a vision of long-range physical and economic development and resource conservation that reflects the aspirations of the community;
- Provides strategies and specific implementing actions that will allow this vision to be accomplished;
- Establishes a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with Plan policies and standards;
- Allows City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve and enhance critical environmental resources, and minimize hazards; and
- Provides the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the Zoning Ordinance, specific plans, and the Capital Improvement Program.

WHY HAS THIS PLAN BEEN PREPARED?

General plans typically look out 20 years in the future and are revised every five to 10 years. Rohnert Park adopted a General Plan in 1990. This plan was updated in 1995, but with a horizon of 2000. In 1996, Rohnert Park voters approved Measure N, which confirmed the existing City limits, along with a 24-acre area (Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan area), as the boundary for urban growth for a four-year period, slated to expire in July 2000.

As of mid-1999, the city is almost entirely built out. Only about 190 acres of commercial and industrial land within the City Limits are vacant and available; more than half of the available non-residential land is part of the existing Hewlett-Packard development. There are no remaining residential sites.

Thus, this General Plan has been prepared to:

- Respond to the need of having policies to guide Rohnert Park's growth before urban boundary provisions of Measure N expire.
- Ensure that the General Plan reflects Rohnert Park's current planning context, and includes goals, policies, and desires of Rohnert Park citizens; and

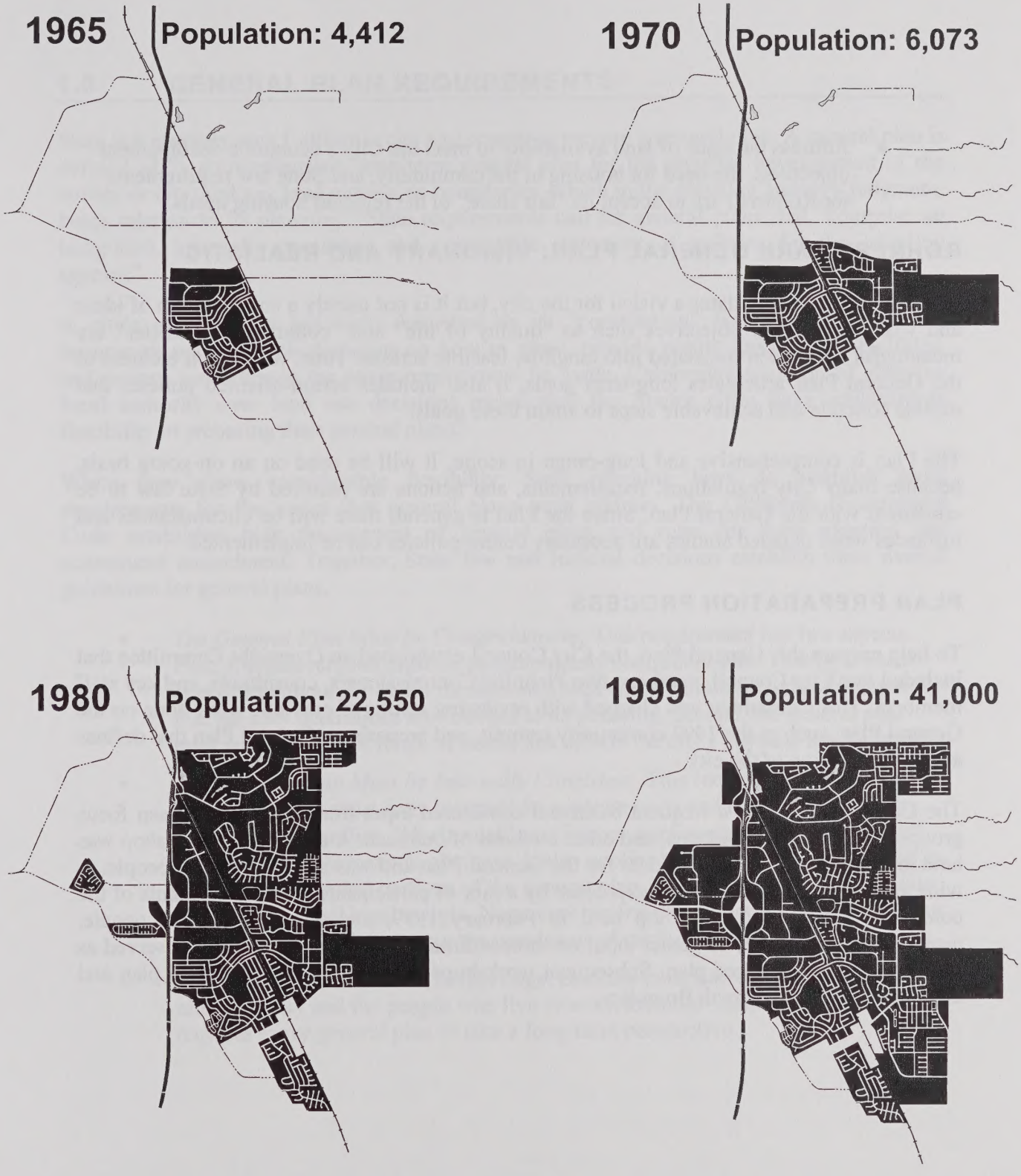


Figure 1.1-1

Sequence of Development

- Address the issue of land availability to meet the City's economic development objectives, the need for housing in the community, and State law requirements for Rohnert Park to accept its "fair share" of the regional housing needs.

ROHNERT PARK GENERAL PLAN: VISIONARY AND REALISTIC

The General Plan articulates a vision for the city, but it is not merely a compendium of ideas and wish lists. Broad objectives such as "quality of life" and "community character" are meaningful only when translated into tangible, feasible actions. Thus, while each element of the General Plan articulates long-term goals, it also includes action-oriented policies that outline concrete and achievable steps to attain these goals.

The Plan is comprehensive and long-range in scope. It will be used on an on-going basis, because many City regulations, requirements, and actions are required by State law to be consistent with the General Plan. Since the Plan is general, there will be circumstances and instances when detailed studies are necessary before policies can be implemented.

PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

To help prepare this General Plan, the City Council established an Oversight Committee that included two City Council members, two Planning Commissioners, consultants, and key staff members. This Committee was charged with reviewing results of previous work done on the General Plan, such as the 1997 community summit, and preparing a General Plan that defines a long-term vision of the city.

The Committee met on a frequent basis and considered input from randomly chosen focus groups, open public workshops, and other methods of outreach. A community workshop was held in January 1999 to solicit ideas for the General Plan and was attended by 110 people. A wide variety of viewpoints were expressed by a mix of participants from all segments of the community. A second workshop held in February 1999, and attended by 120 people, provided an opportunity to gather input on three alternative land use scenarios and served as the basis for the preferred plan. Subsequent workshops helped refine the preferred plan and the proposed Urban Growth Boundary.

1.3 GENERAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

State law requires each California city and county to prepare a general plan. A general plan is defined as "a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries, which in the planning agency's judgment, bears relation to its planning." State requirements call for general plans that "comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency."

A city's general plan has been described as its "constitution" for development – the framework within which decisions on how to grow, provide public services and facilities, and protect and enhance the environment must be made. California's tradition of allowing local authority over land use decisions means that the State's cities have considerable flexibility in preparing their general plans.

While they allow considerable flexibility, State planning laws do establish some requirements for the issues that general plans must address. The California Government Code establishes both the content of general plans and rules for their adoption and subsequent amendment. Together, State law and judicial decisions establish three overall guidelines for general plans.

- *The General Plan Must Be Comprehensive.* This requirement has two aspects. First, the general plan must be geographically comprehensive. That is, it must apply throughout the entire incorporated area and it should include other areas that the City determines are relevant to its planning. Second, the general plan must address the full range of issues that affects the city's physical development.
- *The General Plan Must Be Internally Consistent.* This requirement means that the general plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. "Horizontal" consistency applies as much to figures and diagrams as to the general plan text. It also applies to data and analysis as well as policies. All adopted portions of the general plan, whether required by State law or not, have equal legal weight. None may supersede another, so the general plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element.
- *The General Plan Must Be Long-range.* Because anticipated development will affect the city and the people who live or work there for years to come, State law requires every general plan to take a long-term perspective.

1.4 OBJECTIVES AND THEMES

GENERAL PLAN OBJECTIVES

Several objectives for the General Plan were identified and considered by the Oversight Committee, based on public outreach conducted early in the General Plan process. The objectives provide s foundation for development of the goals and policies in the General Plan, and include:

- Establish a 20-year Urban Growth Boundary;
- Keep the city's small-town feel;
- Provide for slow, managed, and predictable growth;
- Increase housing affordability and diversity;
- Establish better cross-town connections;
- Maintain or increase open space ratios within the City;
- Encourage local jobs and maintain the jobs/housing balance;
- Build and maintain infrastructure in anticipation of growth;
- Integrate land use planning with SSU expansion plans and establish better connections with the University;
- Uphold or improve current levels of city services;
- Encourage socioeconomic diversity;
- Ensure legal adequacy and address external jurisdictional issues, including coordination with the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), Sonoma County, and Rohnert Park's neighbors;
- Increase pedestrian and bike access;
- Provide a framework for design standards that reflect these objectives; and
- Create options for the city's edges. Allow for soft boundaries and scenic corridors.

THEMES

Building on these overall objectives, the General Plan is structured around several themes, which form the basis of goals and policies throughout the document.

1. *An Urban Growth Boundary and Growth Management Program.* The General Plan establishes a 20-year growth boundary, "trigger" caps on development, and adequate public facility requirements. These policies and programs will ensure phased and orderly development, and a sustained high quality of life.

2. *A "Greenbelt" around the city, with targeted growth areas.* Growth is targeted in selected areas to the east and northwest to reinforce a contiguous and compact urban form. Land surrounding the city, where Rohnert Park's boundaries do not coincide with Cotati's, are maintained in open space. An open space buffer is also maintained between new growth areas and Petaluma Hill Road. The buffer varies in width and includes both open land and recreational facilities.

3. *City/University Integration, and Mixed-Use Centers.* The General Plan designates a new pedestrian-oriented University District—envisioned with a mix of residential, retail, entertainment, and office uses that cater to students, faculty, and staff, as well as residents—along Rohnert Park Expressway north of the campus. In addition, the City Center, adjacent to the Expressway and Commerce Boulevard, is designated for a mix of public, office, residential, and retail uses. In addition to these two new centers, the Wilfred-Dowdell Village is already being planned as of 1999 and provides a variety of shops and commercial uses, in a pedestrian-oriented enclave on the westside.

4. *Balanced Neighborhoods.* A guiding premise of the Plan is that activities and facilities used on a frequent basis, such as stores and parks, should be easily accessible to residents. Land uses are designated to ensure balanced neighborhood development with a mix of uses and housing types, provision of parks and schools, and easy access to mixed-use and commercial activity centers.

5. *Increased Connectivity and Accessibility.* The city's existing neighborhoods have few interconnecting streets, and US 101 limits east-west access. Improved connections between neighborhoods, as well as new connections across the highway are included in the General Plan. Roadway improvements and new streets are also proposed to link different neighborhoods and to connect residential areas with SSU.

6. *A Network of Open Space.* Using creeks as the armature, an interconnected network of open space, parks, and trails is provided. These will also enable connections from existing neighborhoods to open space areas beyond Petaluma Hill Road and the SSU campus.

7. *Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Friendly Environments.* Policies for land uses, mixes, intensities, and urban design are established to encourage walking and bicycling. In activity centers like the University District, policies are also established to promote small block sizes and frequent local streets, which help maximize the permeability of a neighborhood for people walking or bicycling.

8. *Enhanced Community Character.* The General Plan establishes specific urban design policies at a citywide, neighborhood, and street scale. Connections between neighborhoods, transitions between urban and open space areas, city and neighborhood edges, community orientation of development, building massing, and streetscapes are all addressed. Policies are also included for viewshed protection.

1.5 REGIONAL LOCATION AND PLANNING BOUNDARIES

REGIONAL LOCATION

As shown in Figure 1.5-1, Rohnert Park is located in central Sonoma County along US 101, in the northern San Francisco Bay Area. The Russian River, the Sonoma and Mendocino coasts, and the Sonoma-Napa wine country are all short distances away. The Pacific Ocean to the west, with its cool marine air, and the warm Sonoma Valley to the east combine to create a mild climate, with mild, wet winters, dry summers, and seasonal fogs.

Sonoma County as a whole is characterized by rolling hills and a series of valleys. Rohnert Park lies within the broad Cotati Valley, which is bounded by the low, rolling coastal hills to the west and the Sonoma Mountains to the east. Several creeks run into the city from the eastern ridgeline. The hills, along with the surrounding crop fields and pastures, provide a rural backdrop to the city.

Figure 1.5-1 shows Rohnert Park's regional location. The city shares its boundaries with Cotati to the southwest. Santa Rosa's Urban Boundary at its closest point comes to within 1,000 feet of Rohnert Park. The city shares portions of its northern and northwestern boundary with two County-designated Community Separators – open spaces that separate Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa. SSU is located just outside the city's eastern boundary.

PLANNING BOUNDARIES

State law requires that each city adopt a general plan "for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which ... bears relation to its planning." Figure 1.5-2 shows the Planning Area. The boundaries of the Planning Area are Stony Point Road to the northwest, Todd Road and the Santa Rosa Urban Boundary to the north, the Taylor Mountain and Sonoma Mountain ridgelines to the east, and Lichau Creek and the Northwestern Pacific railroad right-of-way to the southeast. To the west the Planning Area boundary is conterminous with the 1999 City Limits, because Rohnert Park abuts the Cotati City Limits and SOI on that side.

The Planning Area does not represent the area contemplated for annexation or development, but is the extent of area around the city that was studied and considered in preparing the plan. For example, ridgeline views (the Sonoma Mountain ridgeline is located approximately four miles east of Petaluma Hill Road) are addressed in Chapter 3: Community Design. The Planning Area has not changed from the 1995 General Plan.

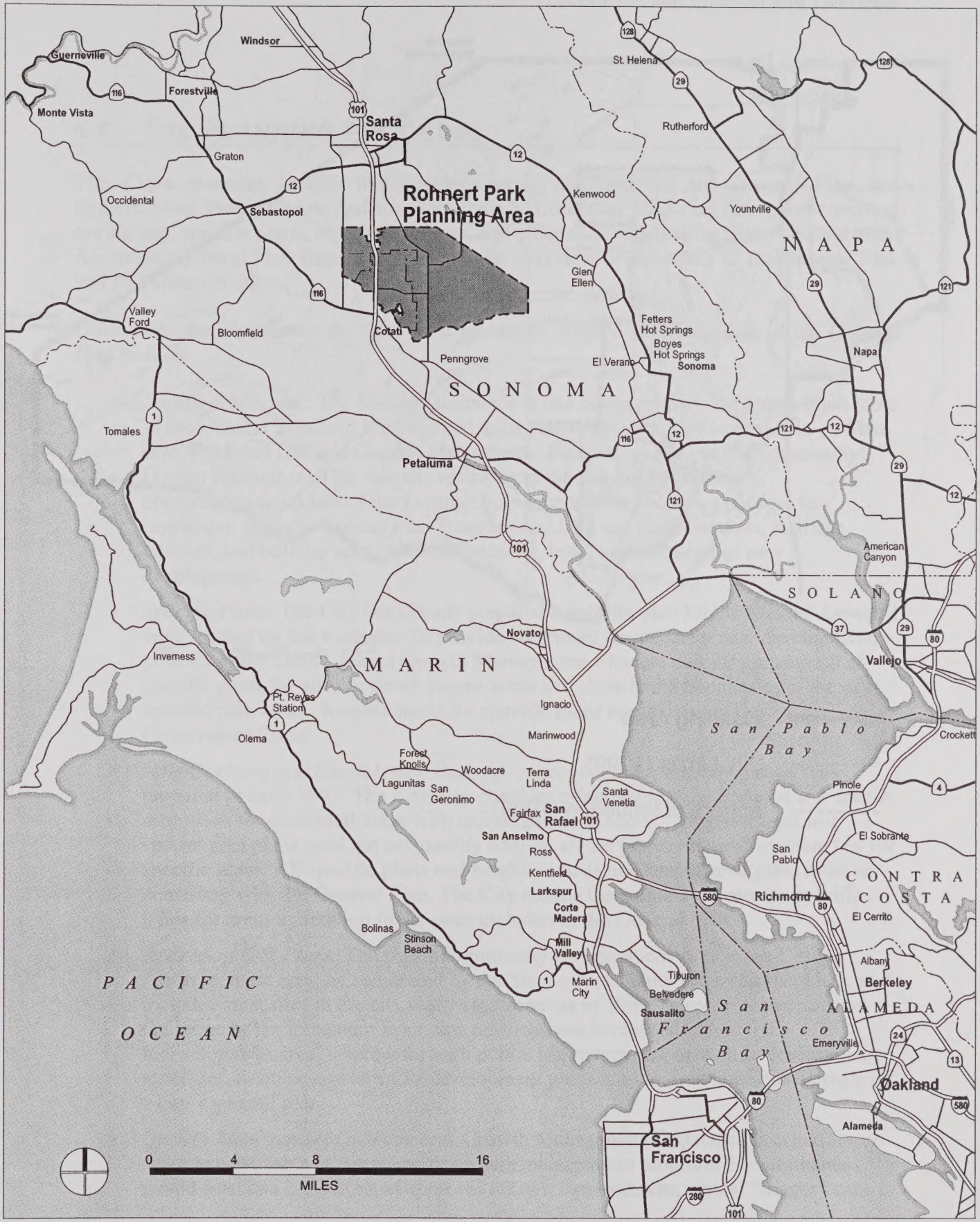
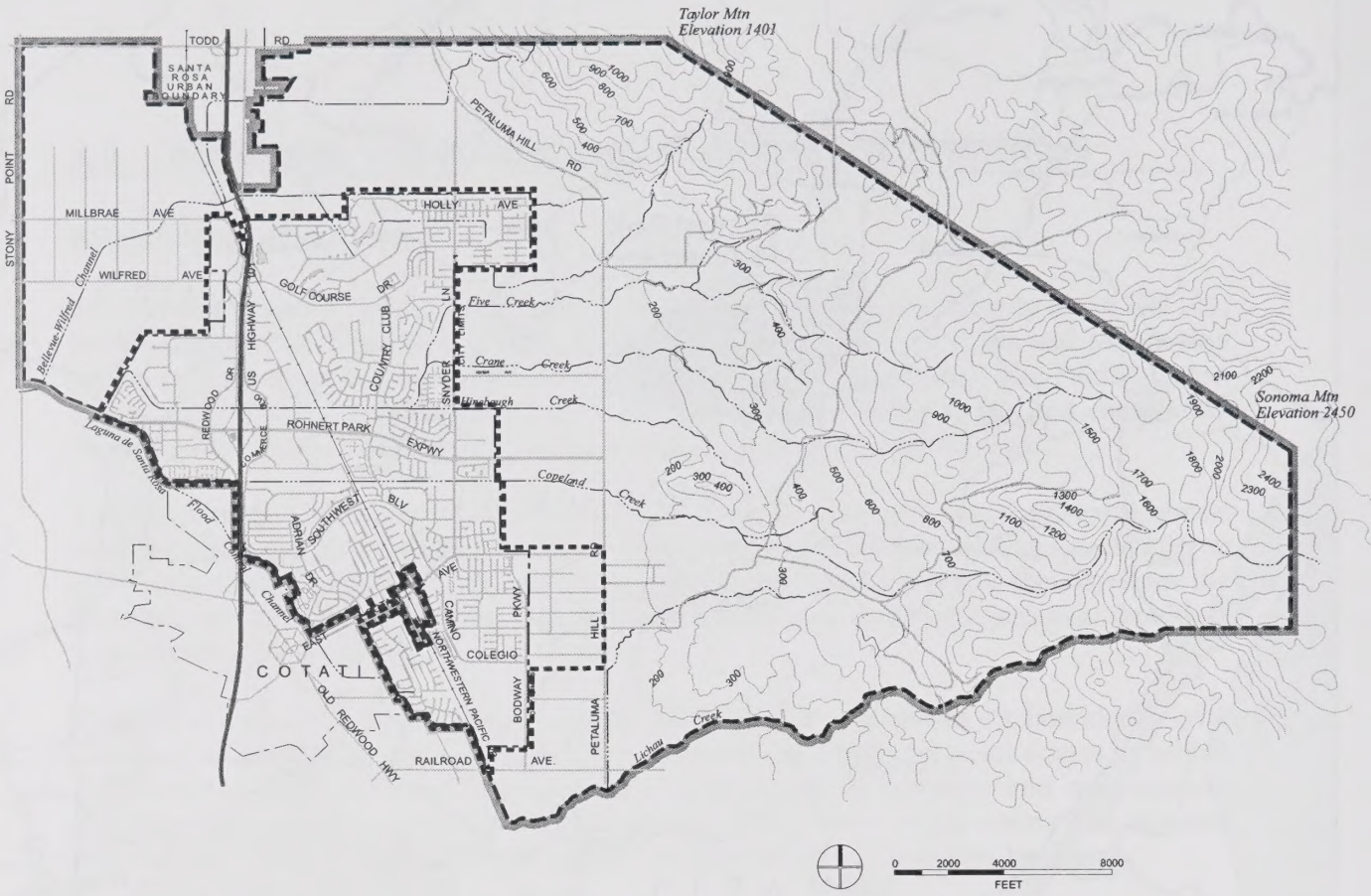


Figure 1.5-1

Regional Location



Planning Area

City Limits (1999)

Sphere of Influence (1999)

Figure 1.5-2

Planning Area

1.6 THE PLANNING PROCESS

The City's planning process includes monitoring and updating the General Plan and implementing Plan policies, updating the Zoning Ordinance, preparing other implementing ordinances, specific plans, design guidelines, and other studies called for in the General Plan. An annual General Plan Report will provide an overview of the status of the General Plan and its implementation.

Ordinances and documents the City must update or prepare upon adoption of the General Plan include:

- *Zoning Ordinance.* The Zoning Ordinance is one of the primary implementation tools of the General Plan, and it is required to be consistent with the General Plan by State law. The Land Use and Growth Management Element, as well as the Community Design Element, call for specific revisions to the Zoning Ordinance. A comprehensive update of the Zoning Ordinance will be necessary in order to implement the new General Plan Diagram and land use classifications, land use policies, and policies relating to the intensity, bulk, and character of new development.
- *Specific Plans.* The City has already prepared a specific plan for the Wilfred-Dowdell area, located on the westside. To provide additional direction for new development, policies in the Land Use and Growth Management Element call for preparation of specific plans for all new development areas and identify the boundaries of the new specific plan areas. Requirements for specific plans are laid out in the State's Government Code.
- *Neighborhood and Special Area Plans.* A concept plan for the City Center was prepared in early 1999. The City may consider establishing neighborhood and special area plans for additional areas with unique planning needs. Neighborhood and special area plans need not necessarily address all the topics required by State law for specific plans. All specific plans and neighborhoods and special area plans must be consistent with the General Plan. The City retains the authority to require specific plans for areas in addition to the ones included in the General Plan.
- *Redevelopment Plans.* The City's Community Development Area is the City's redevelopment area, as authorized by the State's community redevelopment law, and includes most sites in the city that were vacant as of 1999. In redevelopment areas, the property tax increment from new development is reinvested into the redevelopment area, whether through public improvements, economic development strategies, or other measures. Redevelopment plans are required to be consistent with a city's general plan.
- *Growth Management Ordinance.* A Growth Management Ordinance is called for, in order to establish a comprehensive growth management program. The ordinance would establish conditions of approval for new development, annual "trigger" caps

on development, requirements for adequate public facilities, and other relevant provisions.

- *Subdivision Regulations.* Revisions to the City's subdivision regulations may be necessary in conjunction with establishment of the Growth Management Ordinance. Conditions on approval of tentative subdivision maps would need to be established in order to reflect the goals and policies of the growth management program.
- *Capital Improvements Program.* A Capital Improvement Program would need to be established to review and program public facility needs within the city, in conjunction with new development. The program is established through policies in the Land Use and Growth Management Element, as part of an overall growth management strategy.

AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN

As the city's guide for development, the General Plan is the heart of the planning process. It is intended to be a living document and, as such, will be subject to more site-specific and comprehensive amendments over time. Amendments also may be needed from time to time to conform to State or federal law passed after adoption, and to eliminate or modify policies that may become obsolete or unrealistic due to changed conditions (such as completion of a task or project, development on a site, or adoption of an ordinance or plan).

State law limits the number of times a jurisdiction can amend its general plan. Generally, no jurisdiction can amend any mandatory element of its general plan more than four times in one year, although each amendment may include more than one change to the general plan. This restriction, however, does not apply to amendments to:

- Optional elements (such as the Community Design Element);
- Allow development of affordable housing; or
- Comply with a court decision.

ANNUAL REPORT

The California Government Code requires City staff to "provide an annual report to the legislative body on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation" (Government Code § 65400(b)). This report must also be submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and the Department of Housing and Community Development. It must include an analysis of the progress in meeting the city's share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to maintenance, improvement, and development of affordable housing (Government Code § 65583, 65584).

In addition, any mitigation monitoring and reporting requirements prescribed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) identified in the General Plan environmental impact report (EIR) should be addressed in the annual report because they are closely tied to

plan implementation. Finally, the annual report should include a summary of all general plan amendments adopted during the preceding year and an outline of upcoming projects and general plan issues to be addressed in the coming year, along with a work program.

The Rohnert Park General Plan Annual Report will be prepared by City staff during the early stages of the budget process and submitted for review to the Planning Commission, which will make a recommendation to the City Council. Public comments on the Annual Report may be submitted in writing to the Planning and Community Development Department. The Planning Commission and the City Council also will hear public comments on the Annual Report at duly noticed public hearings.

PERIODIC REVIEW

The City will prepare an Implementation Plan within six months of the General Plan's adoption. That Implementation Plan shall contain language that allows for technical changes to be made in the General Plan. Furthermore, implementing ordinances required by the policies of this General Plan shall be adopted as soon as appropriate.

The City will undertake a periodic review of the General Plan, to determine how well the General Plan has performed, that is, whether policies related to development and conservation have been effective. This review will include:

- Analysis of the effectiveness of implementation programs and strategies initiated to carry out the Plan;
- Assessment of the City's job/housing balance;
- Review of growth trends since Plan adoption, assessment of future urban land needs, and review of growth phasing; and
- Review of Performance Indicators, which reflect progress towards implementation of the General Plan.

The first review of the plan will start five years after adoption of the Plan. As part of the review, a target date for a comprehensive update of the General Plan will be established. A report summarizing City staff's findings and recommendations will be circulated for public comment and then presented to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will review the report and make a recommendation to the City Council. The Planning Commission and the City Council also will hear comments on the report at duly noticed public hearings.

1.7 PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Rohnert Park General Plan is organized into the following chapters:

1. *Introduction and Overview*. This includes General Plan objectives and themes, State requirements, and requirements for Plan monitoring, review, and amendments.

2. *Land Use and Growth Management*. This Element provides the physical framework for development in the City. It establishes policies related to the location and intensity of new development, citywide land use policies, and growth management policies.

3. *Community Design*. This Element outlines policies to ensure that new development protects and enhances the community character. Urban form, edges, and views, and neighborhoods, buildings, streets, and parks are all addressed.

4. *Transportation*. This Element includes policies, programs, and standards to maintain efficient circulation. It identifies future street and bikeway improvements, and addresses alternative transportation modes and parking.

5. *Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities*. This Element outlines policies and standards relating to regional and local open space, parks and recreational facilities, and public facilities, including schools, water, and wastewater.

6. *Environmental Conservation*. This chapter outlines policies relating to habitat and biological resources, water quality, air quality, and historic and archaeological resources.

7. *Health and Safety*. This Element addresses the risks posed by seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, as well as other topics, including solid waste management and recycling, hazardous materials, and emergency management.

8. *Noise*. This Element includes policies to limit the impacts of noise from traffic, railroad service, and other sources throughout the city.

9. *Housing*. This Element, which addresses housing availability and affordability according to State requirements, is bound in a separate volume.

10. *Youth and Family* (Reserved). This Element, when completed, will establish policies to promote the health, safety, and welfare of youth and their families.

11. *Economic Development* (Reserved). This Element, when completed, will establish policies to promote economic expansion and job growth in the city, balanced with the need to maintain the city's character.

CORRESPONDENCE TO REQUIRED ELEMENTS

The General Plan includes the seven elements required by State law – Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Safety, Noise, and Housing. The General Plan also includes an optional Community Design Element. Table 1.7-1 shows how the Rohnert Park General Plan elements correspond to State-required elements.

Table 1.7-1:
Correspondence Between Required Elements and Rohnert Park General Plan Elements

Required Element	*General Plan Element*
Land Use	Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management
Circulation	Chapter 4: Transportation
Open Space	Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities
Conservation	Chapter 6: Environmental Conservation
Safety	Chapter 7: Health and Safety
Noise	Chapter 8: Noise
Housing	Chapter 9: Housing

POLICY STRUCTURE

Each element of the General Plan is introduced by brief background information that establishes the policy context. This background material is neither a comprehensive statement of existing conditions nor does it contain any adopted policy, except where specifically stated otherwise. Readers interested in a more detailed description of issues related to a particular topic should refer to the "related documents" listed at the end of this Chapter.

This background information is followed by goals and policies:

- *Goals*. Building on the General Plan objectives, goals are statements of overall philosophy and approach to resolving major issues.
- *Policies*. Policies are specific actions that implement the stated goals. They may establish procedures, standards, or programs or call for specific City actions.

Explanatory material accompanies some of the goals and policies; it provides background information or is intended to guide Plan implementation. The use of "should" or "would" indicates that a statement is advisory, not binding; details will need to be resolved in Plan implementation. Statements of "shall" or "will" are mandatory. Where the same topic is addressed in more than one chapter, sections and policies are cross-referenced, typically in *italics* for easy reference.

Policy Numbering System

Policies in the General Plan are organized using a two-part numbering system that is intended to give each goal and policy a discrete, easily referenced number. The first part refers to the element (or the subsection within the element), and the second refers to the specific goal or policy. The first part is represented by the abbreviated initials of the element or subsection (such as LU for Land Use and GM for Growth Management). For the second part, goals are represented by a capital letter and policies by a number. Thus, the first goal in Chapter 6: Environmental Conservation is EC-A and the first policy is EC-1.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

As part of General Plan preparation, several technical studies were conducted to document environmental conditions and analyze alternatives for development and conservation. While these background studies and environmental documents have guided Plan preparation, they do not represent adopted City policy. Documents include:

- *Environmental Setting for the City of Rohnert Park General Plan Update*, October 1997;
- *Community Issues Report*, January 1998;
- *Land Use Alternatives and Preferred Plan*, May 1999;
- *Fiscal Impacts of General Plan Alternatives*, May 1999;
- *Draft Environmental Impact Report*, October 1999;
- *Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report*, May 2000; and
- *Final Environmental Impact Report* [to be prepared after completion of the public hearing period].

1.8 GENERAL PLAN APPLICABILITY

This General Plan shall apply to all development proposals within the existing and/or proposed city limits, unless otherwise specified in the provisions of this Plan. Applications for development submitted prior to the approval of the General Plan (July 25, 2000) (including applications that have been presented for development and architectural review and other discretionary permit applications) are hereby exempted from this General Plan and are considered "grandfathered" into the Plan.

2 Land Use and Growth Management

Land use and growth management represent the prime planning concerns of most Rohnert Park residents. Based on input from public workshops, most residents want the City to ensure that any new development is in keeping with the community character and minimizes urbanization of open space outside the city. With only about 190 acres of vacant land within City limits in 1999, none of it designated for residential use, and limited reuse opportunities as the city is still fairly young, the location, intensity, character, and management of growth at the city's edges is perhaps the most significant General Plan concern.

The text and policies of the Land Use and Growth Management Element, and the General Plan Diagram constitute the physical framework of the General Plan. The chapter begins with a discussion of community form and population growth and their implications for regional growth management. This is followed by definitions of the land use classifications, information on population and projected buildout, and land use policies. Last, growth management policies are presented. Issues specifically related to urban design and development character are addressed in Chapter 3: Community Design.

2.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

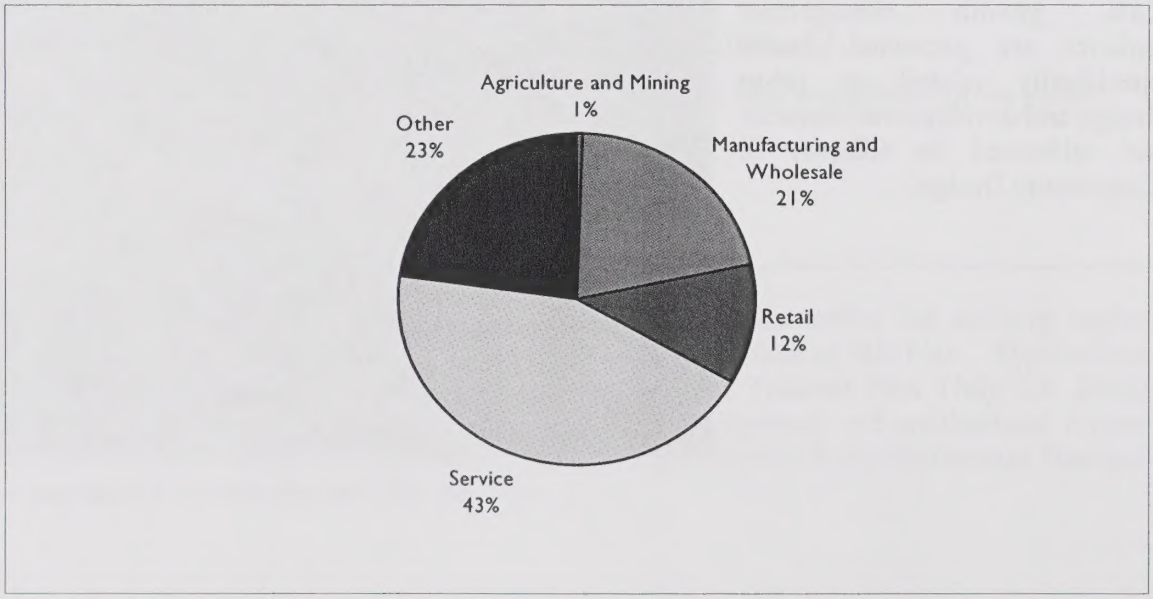
Rohnert Park was established as a master planned community in the late 1950s. The first two neighborhoods were built in 1956, and the city continued to expand over subsequent decades. However, the city's growth over the last few years has been limited; the current City limits were essentially reached in 1990.

PACE OF GROWTH

Historically, Rohnert Park has experienced decreasing rates of population growth. Between 1965 and 1980, the city had an annual average population growth rate of 4.9 percent, and between 1980 and 1999, the average annual growth rate dropped to 3.1 percent. Extensive development in the 1980s at much higher rates of growth was counteracted by minimal residential development during the 1990s.

Most job growth in Rohnert Park has occurred since 1980. Between that year and 1999, the number of jobs in Rohnert Park increased from 5,280 to 21,900, representing an average annual growth rate of 7.8 percent. Figure 2.1-1 shows that most jobs in Rohnert Park were in the service sector in 1999.

Figure 2.1-1: 1999 Jobs by Sector



Source: ABAG Projections '98

LAND USE PATTERN, 1999

As a master planned community, Rohnert Park has a well-structured pattern of land uses. Most neighborhoods are centered around an elementary school and/or a local park. The neighborhoods are separated by major streets, the railroad tracks, and open space and parks, such as the city's two golf courses. Neighborhood shopping centers are located at the intersections of major roads, serving several adjacent neighborhoods. Connections between different neighborhoods are generally limited to the major streets.

Land Use Distribution

The 1999 City limits encompass an area of approximately 4,400 acres (6.9 square miles). Table 2.1-1 shows the distribution of this total area by land use. Residential is the predominant land use, occupying about 44 percent of the area. About a quarter of the remaining developed land has industrial, commercial, or office use, with the balance in public and institutional uses or rights-of-way. Only 192 acres of land are currently vacant.

Table 2.1-1:
Land Uses Inside City limits, 1999

	Gross Acres
Residential	1,971
Professional/Office	47
Commercial	332
Industrial	515
Parks/Recreation	467
Public	223
Streets	643
Vacant	192
Total	4,390

Source: Dyett & Bhatia.

Sphere of Influence and Adjacent Jurisdictions

There was a limited amount of land outside the City limits in the 1999 Rohnert Park Sphere of Influence (SOI). The Sphere of Influence included Canon Manor and 24 commercial acres near Wilfred Avenue west of Redwood Drive. The SOI does not include Creekside Middle School or the Sonoma State University (SSU) campus, which are located adjacent to the eastern City limits. To the southwest, the city shares its boundaries with Cotati. Open space and agricultural lands are adjacent to the city's other boundaries.

To the north and northwest of the city are two County-designated Community Separators – open spaces that separate Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa's Urban Boundary at its closest point comes to within 1,000 feet of Rohnert Park.

Residential Areas

The city's neighborhood design concept was utilized in the development of new neighborhoods. Single family, townhouse, and garden apartment housing were constructed in each neighborhood. As illustrated in Table 2.1-2, the city, excluding Canon Manor, had 15,426 housing units, the majority of which were single-family detached homes. In addition to standard housing constructed on foundations, the city has five mobile home parks and approximately 1,466 mobile homes.[1] Three of the mobile home parks are reserved for adults.

Table 2.1-2:
Rohnert Park Housing Inside City Limits, 1999

	Number of Units	*As % of total*
Single-family Detached	7,221	47%
Single-family Attached	1,719	11%
Multifamily Residences		
2-4 units	1,048	
5 units or more	3,972	
Multifamily sub-total	5,020	33%
Mobile Homes	1,466	9%
Total	15,426	100%

Source: California Department of Finance, Official State Estimates, January 1999

Commercial and Industrial Areas

Rohnert Park does not have a historic central business district. Commercial and industrial development is typically setback from the street, with on-site parking and landscaping. Three shopping centers, anchored by supermarkets, are located near the US 101 and Rohnert Park Expressway interchange, with surrounding restaurants, office buildings, and small commercial complexes. In addition, regional commercial development located west of US 101 includes stores such as Target, Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and Home Express.

[1] State of California, Department of Finance, *Official State Estimates*, (January 1, 1999); Table 2. City/County Population and Housing Estimates.

The city's industrial center is located north of the Rohnert Park Expressway, west of the Northwestern Pacific railroad right-of-way. State Farm Insurance, a major employer, is located in this area. Hewlett Packard, another major employer, is located at the southeastern corner of Rohnert Park.

Hospitality and Visitor Services

The Double Tree Hotel, Mountain Shadows Golf Resort, and Sonoma County Wineries Association (California Welcome Center) are the key hospitality sites in Rohnert Park. They are located at the northern end of the community on Golf Course Drive. The Rohnert Park Stadium, located on Business Park Drive, provides a venue for sporting and other events.

Public Facilities

School Districts

As discussed in Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities, three school districts serve Rohnert Park:

- *Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District.* This school district serves most of Rohnert Park, portions of neighboring Cotati, and limited surrounding areas. The school district operates one high school, two continuation high schools, three middle schools, and nine elementary schools.

- *Bellevue Union School District* and *Santa Rosa High School District.* These two school districts serve areas north of Rohnert Park, including most areas on the westside and eastside, outside the 1999 City limits. None of Rohnert Park's residential areas in 1999 were within these districts.

Parks and Recreation

In 1999, the City operated 32 recreational facilities and parks, including 14 neighborhood parks and nine mini-parks that total 116 acres. In addition, there are nine playgrounds on school sites. A more detailed description of City parks, as well as park policies, appear in Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities.

City Buildings and Land

The City owns and/or operates several other significant facilities. There are 84 City buildings which include offices, public safety facilities, and recreation buildings. The City also entered into partnerships to provide facilities such as the Wine and Visitors Center, the Library, and the Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course. The City owns three significant parcels of land:

- *500 City Hall Drive (8.4 Acres)*. In 1990, the City Council approved plans for a civic center complex at this location. Three buildings were planned – the public safety headquarters, a City office building, and a City Council chambers building. The public safety headquarters was completed and occupied in the mid-1990s.

- *Near Rohnert Park Stadium (14 Acres)*. South of the Rohnert Park Stadium between Redwood Drive and Labath Ave.

- *Near Rohnert Park Expressway (10 Acres)*. North of the Expressway and east of Snyder Lane.

Vacant Land

As shown in Table 2.1-1, only about 190 acres of land within the 1999 City limits, none of it zoned for residential uses, was vacant. Some stores and office spaces were also vacant in the Southwest Boulevard Shopping Center and the Padre Town Station center.

Intensity of Development

Rohnert Park is more densely developed than any other suburban jurisdiction in Sonoma County. Average citywide housing density for land occupied by residential uses, excluding Canon Manor, is approximately 8.0 housing units per gross acre. This is the highest residential density of all cities in Sonoma County. Density varies by neighborhood. Chapter 3: Community Design presents more detail on neighborhood form and character.

Most non-residential uses in Rohnert Park occupy detached, single-story structures and have been subject to maximum lot coverage requirements of 30 to 35 percent. Non-residential sites also typically have large parking lots and landscaping.

PLANS AND PROGRAMS, 1999

While planning in Rohnert Park is controlled by the City, it is influenced by actions of the surrounding jurisdictions as well. This section provides an overview of the major plans and programs in place in the City and adjacent jurisdictions.

Rohnert Park Plans and Programs

In addition to the General Plan, the City had specific area plans, special area plans, and redevelopment plans in place in 1999.

Specific Area Plans and Special Area Plans

The City's specific area plans and special area plans include:

- *Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan.* Consisting of 24 acres between the 1999 City limits and Dowdell Avenue, this area is planned for more than 170,000 square feet of regional commercial development. The Plan has not been adopted by the City Council.

- *City Center Concept Plan.* The City completed a Draft Concept Plan for the City Center, located near the intersection of Rohnert Park Expressway and State Farm Drive, in May 1999. The Concept Plan is not a specific plan but would be used to guide the development of land purchased by the City for new offices and Council chambers. The Plan outlines a vision for the City Center that features a pedestrian-oriented main street, and establishes direction for land use, urban design, and circulation.

Community Development Area

The Community Development Area is the City's redevelopment area. It includes all sites that were vacant within the Rohnert Park City limits in 1999, except for a five-acre commercial site near the intersection of East Cotati Avenue and Bodway Parkway. The property tax increment from new development in the redevelopment area is reinvested into the area through public improvement or other strategies. The City has been adhering to the State requirement of setting aside 20 percent of available tax increment for low/moderate income housing, which are available to meet the City's housing obligations.

Plans and Programs of Surrounding Jurisdictions

Sonoma County

In response to strong growth pressures, the Sonoma County General Plan establishes a framework for protecting open space and agricultural uses, and uses a variety of strategies for limiting new development.

- *Large-lot Zoning.* Land adjacent to Rohnert Park is designated for very low-density residential uses (typically 10-acre or 20-acre lots) and a range of small-scale and commercial farming activities.

- *Community Separators.* Community separators are established adjacent to existing cities to limit development and provide distinct physical and visual spaces between cities. Community separators are located between Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa, and between Cotati and Petaluma, southwest of Rohnert Park. The amount and intensity of development are limited, and additional requirements are imposed for screening, clustering, and preservation of trees and landforms.

- *Urban Service Boundaries.* Policies limit the extension of urban services to land capable of supporting agriculture.

- *Scenic and Riparian Corridors.* US 101 and Petaluma Hill Road are designated as scenic corridors. As such, adjacent development is required to have setbacks of 30 percent or 200 feet, whichever is smaller, and a 20-foot setback in urban service areas. Copeland Creek and Crane Creek are classified riparian corridors and are subject to a 100-foot streamside conservation area setback.

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

Sonoma County voters approved a ¼-cent sales tax for the preservation of agricultural lands and open space. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District was formed for administration of these funds and has identified a process for determining lands to be preserved. Preservation of community separator lands is a primary goal, and the new acquisition plan calls for an emphasis on "greenbelt" conservation and easements and fee purchases. Several sites or easements in the Rohnert Park area have already been purchased for preservation purposes; these sites are shown on Figure 5.1-1.

Williamson Act Lands

Several sites around Rohnert Park have Williamson Act contracts. The Williamson Act of 1965 (California Land Conservation Act, Government Code § 51200 et seq.) is intended to discourage the unnecessary and premature conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses by taxing land according to income-producing value, rather than its "highest and best use." Under contract, farmers agree not to develop their land for 10 years in exchange for the lower tax rate; contracts are automatically renewed each year.

Land under a Williamson Act is designated as an agricultural preserve, which can be used for agricultural, recreational use, or open space use. Recreational uses include walking, hiking, picnicking, camping, swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, or other outdoor games or sports; open space uses include wildlife habitat and managed wetland areas. Lands within a scenic highway corridor may be included in an agricultural preserve.

Santa Rosa

The Santa Rosa General Plan establishes an Urban Boundary, and policies encourage preservation of community separators and agricultural lands outside the Urban Boundary. Major boundary changes can only be made during the five-year General Plan update process.

According to the Santa Rosa General Plan, the Urban Boundary contained about 149,600 persons in 1995 and can ultimately accommodate a population of 201,000. The City

maintains a growth management program that limits residential building permits to 1,000 per year until 2000, 900 per year between 2001 and 2005, and 850 per year from 2006 to 2010.

Cotati

Cotati's General Plan expresses the City's desire to maintain a small-town feeling and promote compact development. The 1998 Cotati General Plan reduced the western extent of the City's Urban Growth Boundary, while expanding it along the edges of Rohnert Park. Commercial Industrial and Rural Residential (1.0 unit/acre) uses are planned for areas adjacent to Rohnert Park. The Commercial Industrial area, while it does not border on Rohnert Park, could cause off-site impacts like traffic and noise.

Cotati's growth management program limits the City to issuing 75 residential building permits per year, plus an additional 25 for affordable units. Average annual growth has been closer to 50 units.[2] The 1999 population of about 7,200 is estimated to increase to more than 7,500 by 2005 and more than 8,000 by 2010.

Sonoma State University

While SSU contributes strongly to the city's identity, it actually lies outside the city's eastern boundary and the City's 1999 SOI. The 214-acre campus supports 7,000 full time equivalent (FTE) students and 1,200 employees, making it one of the largest employers in the area. University students, faculty and staff are a part of the Rohnert Park community.

The 1992 SSU Master Plan featured 880,000 square feet of new classrooms, facilities, and parking, and enhanced campus entryways. At buildout, the Master Plan was designed to increase the number of FTE students to 10,000. As of 1999, SSU is preparing an updated Master Plan that plans for additional classrooms and facilities, as well as new student housing. The updated plan is still expected to have 10,000 FTE students at buildout. The University is considering acquisition of the site west of the concert hall for long-term expansion.

In September 1998, SSU completed a master plan for a new concert hall and music center to be located between the existing campus and the Rohnert Park Expressway. Approximately 97,000 square feet in size, the facility features a 1,400-seat concert hall, an outdoor theater, a recital hall, a rehearsal hall, a banquet hall, and as well as classrooms and offices.

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[2] City of Cotati, 1998 General Plan Update (October 1998), 10.

Canon Manor

The Canon Manor subdivision is located immediately south of SSU, west of Petaluma Hill Road. Although outside of the 1999 City limits, Canon Manor is within Rohnert Park's SOI, and within the Urban Growth Limit shown in this General Plan. The County allowed large-lot development on parcels accessed on graveled roads and supported by individual water wells and septic systems. Water wells and septic systems in close proximity to each other in the heavy clay soils of Canon Manor may result in the infiltration of pollutants from septic systems into water wells. After extended periods of dry weather, the water table may drop below the level of water wells. Public improvements, commonly provided within City limits, either do not exist or were not constructed to City standards in Canon Manor. Property owners, Sonoma County, LAFCO and the City eventually will need to resolve public service issues. Topics to be addressed include:

- Facility standards;
- Costs and mechanisms to install needed facilities;
- Payment of costs by Canon Manor property owners;
- Extension of City services, specifically water and sewer; and
- Annexation.

Penngrove

Established in 1882, Penngrove is a small, unincorporated, rural town at the foothills of Sonoma Mountain. The Penngrove Specific Plan was adopted in 1984 and encompasses 2,750 acres located between Petaluma, Cotati, Rohnert Park and the Canon Manor subdivision to the north. Penngrove's core area is served by sewer system and aqueduct water, with parcels ranging from 1/4 acre to 1 acre. The outlying areas are served by private wells and septic, with parcels ranging from 2 acres to the 20-acre density established by the Sonoma Mountain Specific Plan. Based on low-density land use policies, the Penngrove Specific Plan intends to accommodate a population of 2,744 at buildout.

The Penngrove Specific Plan is committed to: a community centered concept; provisions of greenbelts surrounding and separating urban areas; retention of agricultural resources; adherence to the principle of environmental suitability; and preservation of natural resources.

Regional Agencies and Programs

Implementation of the General Plan will require coordination with several regional and other local agencies.

Sonoma County and Community Separators

Sonoma County communities strive to maintain clear physical boundaries in order to avoid corridor-style urbanization and suburban sprawl. This concept is recognized as "community separators" in the Sonoma County General Plan. Two community separators are located in the Rohnert Park-Cotati area. The Petaluma-Rohnert Park separator is located between Petaluma, Penngrove, and Rohnert Park-Cotati. The second separator is generally located north and northwest of Rohnert Park, between Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa (see Figure 5.1-1). The Sonoma County General Plan limits land uses in community separators to open space, agriculture, and rural residential development.

Santa Rosa's Urban Boundary, along the Wilfred Channel, is close to the northernmost City limits. A County-designated Community Separator is in effect in this area, providing a green space between Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park. The Sonoma County General Plan allows only very low-density residential development in the separators, in order to provide visual and physical greenbelts between communities.

For detailed discussion and policies related to separators, including the Sonoma County Measure D, see Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities.

Regulation of Uses in Unincorporated Areas

Because the General Plan does not propose annexation of all land within the Planning Area, development on unincorporated land, essentially all land east of Petaluma Hill Road in the Planning Area, will continue to be regulated by the County General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. All land in the area is currently designated by the County for agricultural and rural residential uses.

Land outside the Santa Rosa Urban Boundary, within the southern Santa Rosa SOI adjacent to Rohnert Park, includes land designed as community separator. Very low density residential use designations are in place there and permit minimum residential lots of 0.5 to 5 acres. These designations are intended to be permanent, not to reserve land for future development.

2.2 GENERAL PLAN DIAGRAM AND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

GENERAL PLAN LAND USE FRAMEWORK

General Plan Diagram

The land use framework of the General Plan is embodied in the General Plan Diagram (Figure 2.2-1), which is a graphic representation of the themes and policies in the Plan. The General Plan Diagram designates the proposed general location, distribution, and extent of land uses through buildout, which is expected by about 2020. As required by State law, land use classifications, shown as color/graphic patterns, letter designations, or labels on the Diagram, specify a range for housing density and building intensity for each type of designated land use. These density/intensity standards allow circulation and public facility needs to be determined; they also reflect the environmental carrying-capacity limitations established by other elements of the General Plan.

The Diagram is to be used and interpreted only in conjunction with the text and other figures contained in the General Plan. The legend of the General Plan Diagram abbreviates the land use classifications described below, which represent an adopted part of the General Plan.

The General Plan Diagram is not parcel-specific, and uses on sites less than one acre in size are generally not depicted on the Diagram. The interpretation of consistency with the General Plan on sites less than one acre in size will be done through the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map.

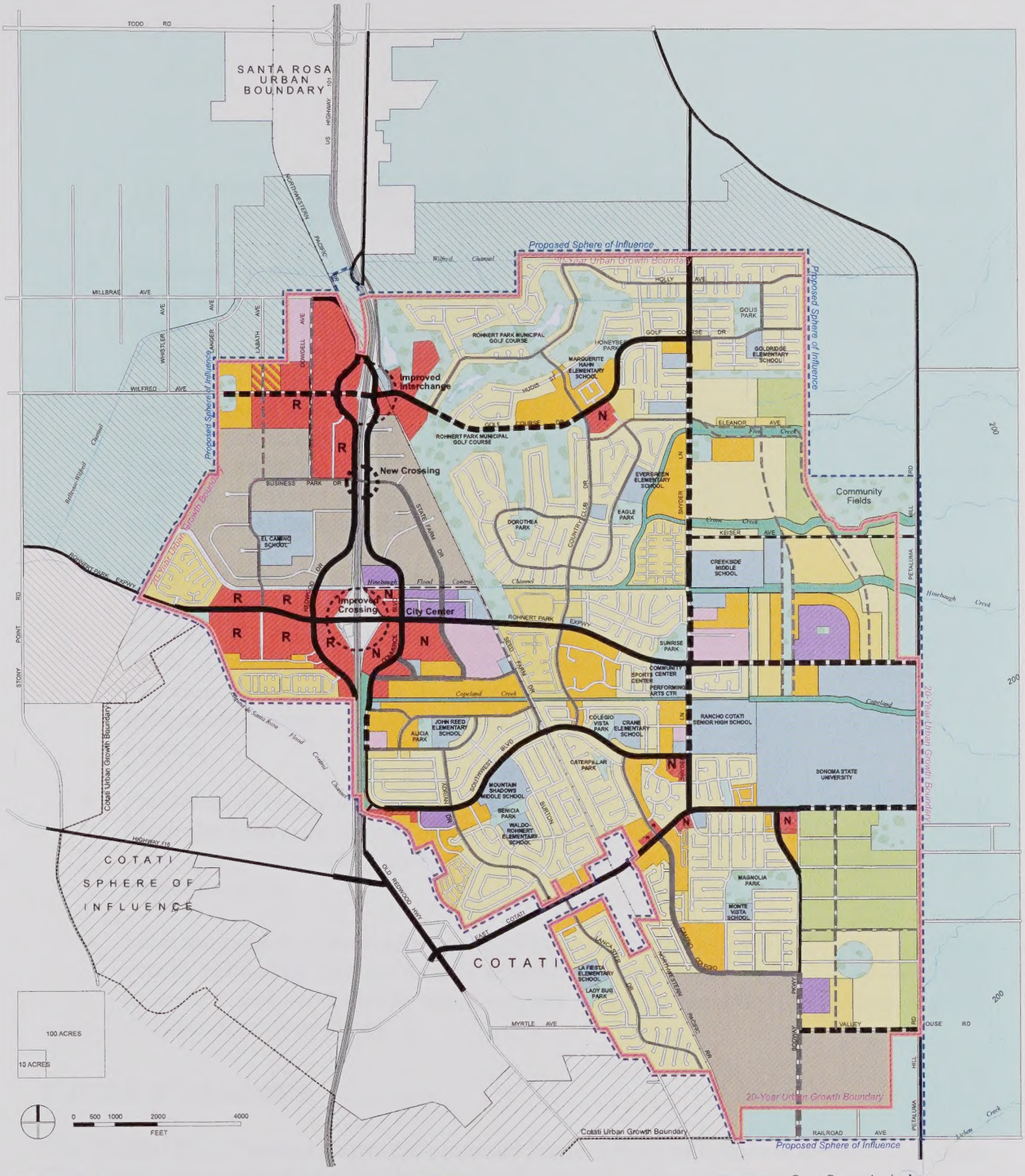
Land Use Framework Guiding Principles

The General Plan Diagram embodies several ideas and principles. These include:

- *Compact urban form.* All growth is contiguous to existing City limits and within 4,000 feet of existing (as of 1999) development. The compact form of growth is supplemented by maintenance of urban densities, to help preserve open space, protect agriculture, and ensure efficient provision of services.

- *Urban Growth Boundary.* The General Plan delineates an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) as the edge within which all urban development will be contained, until the year 2020.

- *Close physical integration of the city and Sonoma State University.* New growth areas are located to foster a strong physical "town and gown" connection. A new University District is located north of the campus to bring the city and the University together,



- Rural Estate Residential (up to 2 un/ac)
- Low Density Residential (4-6 un/ac)
- Medium Density Residential (6-12 un/ac)
- High Density Residential (12-30 un/ac)
- Commercial
  - **N** Neighborhood Commercial
  - **R** Regional Commercial
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Office
- Public/Institutional
- Parks
- Open Space-Environmental Conservation
- Open Space-Agriculture and Resource Management
- Community Separator
- 20-Year Urban Growth Boundary
- Major Arterial (4-6 lanes) (Existing / Proposed)
- Minor Arterial (2 lanes)
- Major Collector (4 lanes)
- Minor Collector (2 lanes)

All maps are intended to be consistent with the General Plan Diagram. Additional adjustments to the other maps may be made for consistency

Figure 2.2-1

General Plan Diagram

Adopted July 2000
(Rev. 11/00)

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

and provide a mixed-use residential and commercial center to meet the needs of students, faculty, visitors, as well as city residents.

- *Increased connectivity between and within neighborhoods.* New streets are designated to result in increased connectivity. In addition, policies for locating local streets are included to ensure neighborhood-level connections while providing flexibility to project developers.

- *Designation of mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented activity centers.* Two pedestrian-oriented mixed-use centers are designated: the University District and the City Center. In addition, mixed-use or multi-use development is encouraged at three other sites: the northwest growth area, southwest of Adrian Drive/Southwest Boulevard, and a center in the southeast.

- *Variety of housing and mix of housing types in all neighborhoods.* The General Plan provides for a variety of housing types, including Estate Residential, a housing type currently not found in Rohnert Park, as well as higher density housing to meet the needs of students, and mobile home subdivisions to provide for affordable housing. The General Plan Diagram illustrates neighborhoods with integrated housing types, designed to locate a larger share of residences close to transit and neighborhood centers.

- *Protection of creeksides and provision of a network of trails and parks.* The Diagram illustrates a network of open space along creeks that will be realized over time. These open space areas will also facilitate development of a network of bikeways and pedestrian trails.

- *Land use pattern to maximize accessibility to parks and commercial centers.* All high density residential uses are located adjacent to parks/greenways or mixed-use centers to ensure that recreational and everyday shopping facilities are within walking distance of most residents.

FUTURE BOUNDARIES

The General Plan Diagram shows the proposed future Sphere of Influence for the City; future City limits are proposed to coincide with the Sphere of Influence. Decisions on changes to the City limits and the Sphere of Influence require approval of the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). Also shown on the Diagram is the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), which outlines the limits of urban growth under this General Plan. This UGB is entirely within the proposed sphere, and will become operative upon the adoption of this General Plan; UGBs are neither recognized by LAFCO, nor do they require LAFCO approval.

DENSITY/INTENSITY STANDARDS

The General Plan establishes density/intensity standards for each use classification. Residential density is expressed as housing units per gross (including public streets and other rights-of-way) acre. Maximum permitted ratio of gross floor area to site area (FAR) is specified for both residential and non-residential uses. FAR is a broad measure of building bulk that controls both visual prominence and traffic generation. It can be clearly translated to a limit on building bulk in the Zoning Ordinance and is independent of the type of use occupying the building.

FAR limitations are included for residential land use classifications in order to relate housing size to lot size; both density and FAR standards shall apply to residential developments; the application of residential density and intensity standards is illustrated in Figure 2.2-2. Building area devoted to structured or covered parking (if any) is not included in FAR calculations for non-residential developments. However, parking garages/structures are included in FAR calculations for residential uses. The City intends to incorporate these FARs as part of the Zoning Ordinance, and when so incorporated, amend the General Plan to delete residential FARs from the General Plan.

Density (housing units per gross acre) and intensity (FAR) standards are for gross developable land (that is, including streets and other rights-of-way), but excluding areas subject to physical or environmental constraints, as well as areas dedicated for creekside/greenways or habitat protection.

Existing legal housing units within the City limits as of November 1, 1999 are grandfathered and are deemed to be fully conforming to the intensity (FAR) provisions of the General Plan.

Exceptions

The Zoning Ordinance could provide specific exceptions to the FAR limitations for uses with low employment densities, such as research facilities, or low peak-hour traffic generation, such as hospitals. Intensity standards for non-residential and mixed-use development are for the entire development site; that is, intensities on individual parcels may exceed the maximum, provided the overall development project does not exceed the stipulated intensity.

For residential uses, in contrast, density standards shall apply to individual parcels. The Planning Commission may permit, subject to findings, deviations in residential density standards on individual parcels for clustered development with common open space, as stipulated in the policies included later in this chapter, provided overall project density is not exceeded.

Table 2.2-1:
Standards for Density and Development Intensity

Land Use Designation	*Residential Density (units/gross acre)*[1]	Assumed Average for Buildout Calculations	*Maximum Permitted FAR*[2]
Residential[3]			*See Table 2.2-2 for residential FAR standards*
Estate	up to 2.0	2.0	
Low Density	4.0-6.0	6.0	
Medium Density	6.1-12.0	12.0	
High Density	12.1-24.0	21.0	
Office	-		1.0
Commercial			
Neighborhood/Community/Regional	-		0.4
Hotels	-		1.5
Industrial			0.5[4]
Mixed-use Development[5]			1.5 for commercial and office mixed-use areas 2.0 for residential uses mixed with office or commercial

1. 25 percent bonus is available for projects meeting State criteria for bonus for affordable housing (Government Code § 65915). 10 percent discretionary bonus (cannot be combined with 25 percent affordable housing bonus) is available upon Planning Commission approval only, and only for projects undertaking off-site improvements (such as streetscape improvements) that further the City's community design objectives.

2. Parking structures and garages are excluded from FAR calculations for non-residential and mixed-use developments.

3. For residential uses, both density and FAR limitations shall apply.

4. Discretionary increases may be permitted up to a total FAR of 1.0, subject to review and approval for development meeting specific standards included in the Zoning Ordinance.

5. FARs for mixed-use classifications are for combined residential and non-residential development; no separate residential density limitations are specified.

Source: City of Rohnert Park, Dyett & Bhatia

Maximum Density/Intensity Not Automatic

The density/intensity standards do not imply that development projects will be approved only at the maximum density or intensity specified for each use. Zoning regulations consistent with General Plan policies and/or site conditions may reduce development potential within

the stated ranges. Examples of conditions that may limit attainment of the maximum densities/intensities include, but are not limited to:

- Development standards established in the Zoning Ordinance (such as for heights and setbacks, or minimum habitable space) may limit building size;
- The Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map may break down a single General Plan land use classification into two or more districts with intermediate maximums; and
- The Zoning Ordinance may establish intermediate maximum densities/intensities, with attainment of the maximum in the General Plan subject to specific performance, design, or other criteria.

In addition, policies for specific areas or sites in the General Plan may restrict development intensities to less than what may otherwise be permitted under a specific land use classification.

Gross density standards and assumed averages for residential categories are listed in Table 2.2-1. In addition, maximum sizes for housing units are specified in Table 2.2-2, and are intended to ensure that residential units are roughly proportional to the size of their lots. Design standards specified in the Community Design Element and/or the Zoning Ordinance should also be consulted in addition to the density/intensity standards in this element.

Table 2.2-2:
Maximum Size of Housing Units

Residential Land Use Designation	*Maximum Size of Unit Permitted (including garages and accessory structures; in sq. ft.)*	*FAR Factor*
Estate	no maximum[1]	no maximum
Low Density	600 + FAR Factor x net lot area	0.40
Medium Density	400 + FAR Factor x net lot area	0.55
High Density	FAR Factor x net lot area	1.15

1. Building intensity will be regulated through design guidelines. See Chapter 3: Community Design, Policy CD-23.

Source: City of Rohnert Park, Dyett & Bhatia

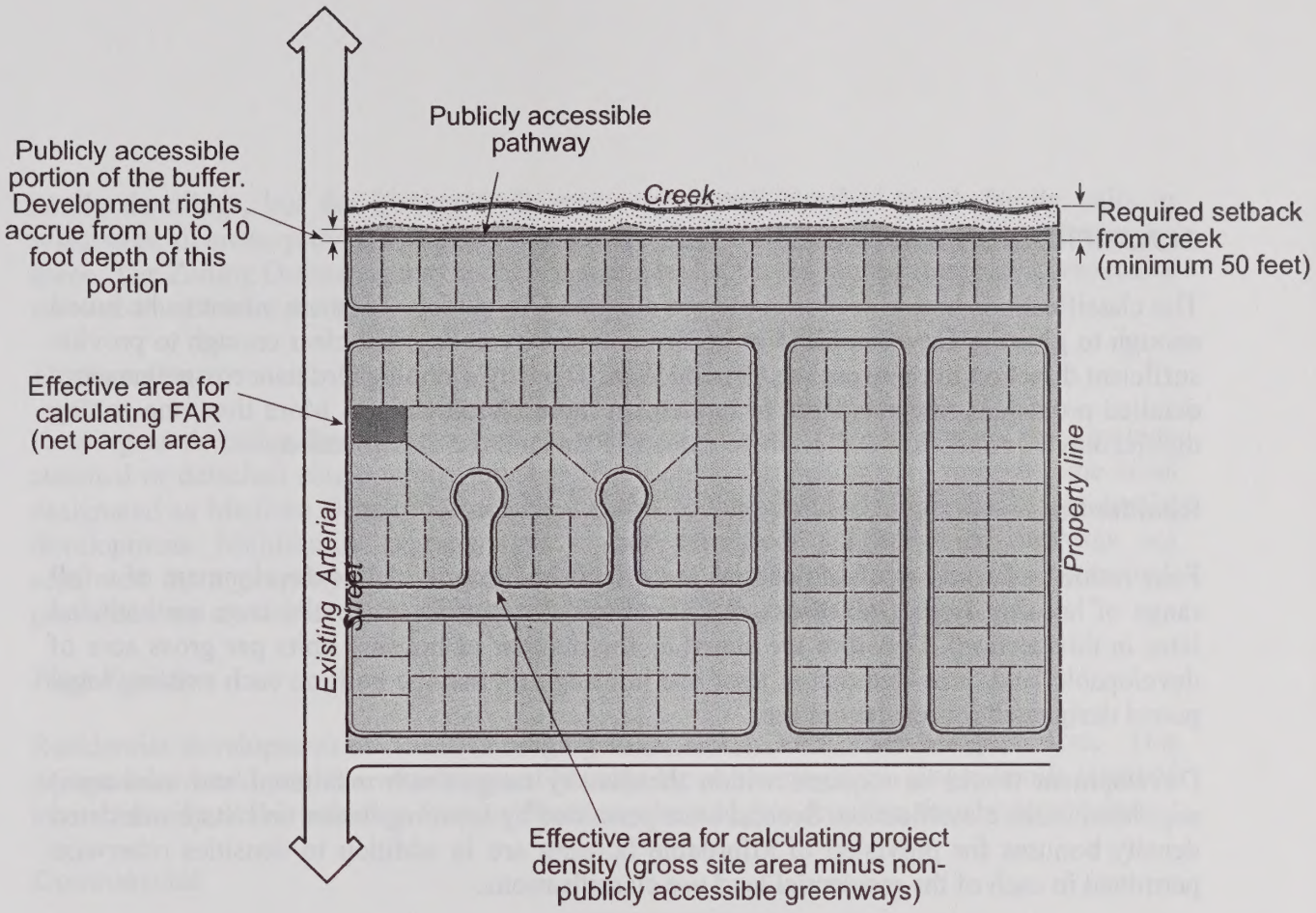


Figure 2.2-2

Residential Density and FAR Calculation (illustrative)

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The classifications in this section represent adopted City policy. They are meant to be broad enough to give the City flexibility in implementing City policy, but clear enough to provide sufficient direction to carry out the General Plan. The City's Zoning Ordinance contains more detailed provisions and standards to implement these classifications. More than one zoning district may be consistent with a single General Plan land use classification.

Residential

Four residential land use classifications are established to provide for development of a full range of housing types (mixed-use classifications that permit residential uses are included later in this section). Densities are stated as the number of housing units per gross acre of developable land, provided that at least one housing unit may be built on each existing legal parcel designated for residential use.

Development would be required within the density range (both maximum and minimum) stipulated in the classification. Second units permitted by local regulation and State-mandated density bonuses for provision of affordable housing are in addition to densities otherwise permitted in each of the residential land use classifications.

Assumed average densities listed are used to calculate probable housing unit and population holding capacity. Neither the averages nor the totals constitute General Plan policy. Population densities corresponding to the housing unit densities can be obtained by multiplying each housing unit by 2.62, the average projected Rohnert Park household size in 2020, according to the Association of Bay Area Governments' (ABAG) Projections '98.

Rural Estate Residential

Single-family detached residential development at densities of 2.0 housing units per gross acre or less. This classification is intended for two areas: Canon Manor, and at designated locations at the city's ultimate physical edge on the eastside to provide transition between urban and open space uses. The Zoning Ordinance may split this classification into two categories: Rural Residential, to be applied to the Canon Manor, and Estate Residential, which would be applied to the other areas with this designation.

Low Density

Single-family residential development at density of 4.0 to 6.0 units per gross acre. Typical lots would be 6,000 square feet, but the minimum would be 5,000 square feet, and the Zoning Ordinance may permit smaller lots (4,500 square feet) for projects that use features such as clustering and common open space that may result in somewhat smaller lots, but increased community-wide open space. This classification is mainly intended for detached single-

family dwellings, but the Zoning Ordinance may permit attached single-family units in selected or all areas, provided each unit has ground-floor living area and private outdoor open space. The Zoning Ordinance may include a separate district for mobile home subdivisions or zero-lot-line developments.

Medium Density

Housing at densities from 6.1 to 12.0 units per gross acre. Dwelling types may include attached or detached single-family housing. The Zoning Ordinance may reserve some areas designated as Medium Density for detached (zero-lot-line or other) single-family residential development. Multifamily housing type is not permitted. Side-by-side duplexes not separated by a property line or without individual heating systems are also permitted, provided they are similar in appearance to single family structures.

High Density

Residential development at densities ranging from 12.1 to 24.0 units per gross acre. This designation would permit a wide range of housing types, ranging from single-family attached to multifamily, and is intended for specific areas where higher densities may be appropriate.

Commercial

This designation is intended to provide sites for retail areas containing a wide variety of businesses, including: retail stores, eating and drinking establishments, commercial recreation, service stations, automobile sales and repair services, financial, business and personal services, hotels and motels, and educational and social services. In order to provide for the housing anticipated in the Housing Element, and provide for internal consistency between the Land Use Element and the Housing Element, residential uses may be conditionally permitted on two sides, subject to the provisions of the Housing Element: E. Cotati Avenue/Bodway Parkway site and the Mountain Shadows proposed site on Golf Course Drive. Maximum permitted FAR is 1.5 for hotels and 0.4 for all other uses. Letter designation on the General Plan Diagram may limit the type of commercial uses in certain districts, as follows:

- *N (Neighborhood)*. Stores, personal service establishments, offices, financial businesses, and restaurants and cafes that serve the everyday needs of the immediate neighborhood. Department or big-box stores are not permitted, and the Zoning Ordinance may place limitations on automotive (for example, gas stations, auto sales and repair) and drive-through establishments.

- *R (Regional)*. Shopping centers that typically include department stores or big-box stores, which attract consumers from outside the city. Neighborhood-oriented commercial uses may be limited within this district.

Office

This designation is intended to provide sites for administrative, financial, business, professional, medical and public offices, and support commercial uses. Limits on retail activities in the district will be specified in the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance may permit hospitals, extended care and other similar facilities in specific locations. The maximum FAR is 1.0.

Industrial

This designation accommodates campus-like environments for corporate headquarters, research and development facilities, offices, light manufacturing and assembly, industrial processing, general service, warehousing, storage and distribution, and service commercial uses. Retail is permitted as an ancillary use only. Maximum FAR is 0.5, but discretionary increases may be permitted up to a total FAR of 1.0, subject to review and approval for development meeting specific standards included in the Zoning Ordinance.

Mixed-Use

This designation accommodates a variety of compatible businesses, stores, institutions, service organizations, and residences in a pedestrian-oriented setting. Allowable uses include multifamily residences, retail shops, financial, business and personal services, and restaurants. Automotive (for example, motor vehicle sales, motor vehicle part sales, and gasoline stations) and drive-through establishments are not permitted. Plan policies and/or the Zoning Ordinance may require certain uses—such as ground-level retail—in some or all portions of a site with this designation.

The maximum FAR for developments with a non-residential mix of uses is 1.5 and for residential and non-residential uses combined is 2.0. Separate residential density limitations are not established; however, minimum unit size requirements established in the Zoning Ordinance will result in maximum density limitations. In addition, limitations on the size and location of parking, coupled with building orientation and design standards, as specified in Chapter 3: Community Design and/or the Zoning Ordinance will ensure that a pedestrian-oriented environment is created.

Areas on the General Plan Diagram that are striped with two different colors are not considered mixed use, which only applies to the areas with the Mixed Use designation. Striped areas would allow either of the two uses represented by the striping, or a combination of the two, consistent with their separate land use classifications.

Public/Institutional

To provide for schools, government offices, transit sites, and other facilities that have a unique public character, as well as Sonoma State University. Religious facilities are not

called out separately on the General Plan Diagram, although they would be permitted in this designation as well as other residential and commercial districts; these facilities may or may not be specifically delineated on the Zoning Map.

Parks/Recreation

This designation provides for parks for active and passive recreation, recreation complexes, community fields, public golf courses, stadiums, arboretums, and greenways. Ancillary facilities such as concession stands, clubhouses, and equipment rental are also allowed.

Open Space

Two types of open space designations are included:

Open Space for Environmental Conservation

This designation includes sites with environmental and/or safety constraints. Included are riparian corridors, sensitive habitats, and wetlands. For sites entirely within this designation, development is limited to one housing unit per existing legal parcel, provided policies in Chapter 6: Environmental Conservation, as well as protection standards that may be specified in the Zoning Ordinance or elsewhere, are adhered to. For parcels partially within this designation, no development is permitted within the Open Space designated area if other land within the parcel does not have environmental and/or safety constraints. Land area with this designation shall not be used in calculating allowable development. However, for parcels that include creekside buffers, development rights that would result if adjacent land uses were to be extended into a buffer can be transferred for land in the buffer that is directly accessible to the public, subject to a maximum 10-foot depth, on an acre-for-acre basis, to the developable parts of the parcel.

Open Space for Agriculture and Resource Management

This designation includes orchards and cropland, grasslands, and very low density rural residential areas, not to exceed one housing unit per 20 or 40 acres, provided that one housing unit may be built on each existing parcel. Agriculture is permitted with fewer restrictions on keeping animals than in the residential classifications. This classification will also accommodate any greenbelts and/or urban buffer areas that may be designated in the future. Greenbelts are open space, park land, and agricultural areas located outside urban areas, as opposed to urban parks located within developed areas.

20 Year Urban Growth Boundary

This is the area within which urban development will be contained over the period 2000 to 2020.

2.3 GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT

Table 2.3-1 shows the buildout acreage of the General Plan Diagram. Approximately 1,260 net acres would be developed within the UGB, including infill sites. An additional 50 acres would be developed for community fields outside the UGB. The table breaks out acreage by area of the city: areas inside the 1999 City limits and three areas outside the 1999 City limits, the eastside (north of the SSU campus), Canon Manor and southeast (south of the SSU campus), and the westside (west of Dowdell Avenue). Most areas that are planned for new development are residential in use, totaling about 620 acres. An additional 550 acres outside the UGB and inside the SOI would be used for parks and open space. Figure 2.3-1 compares land uses in 1999 to those resulting from full buildout of the General Plan.

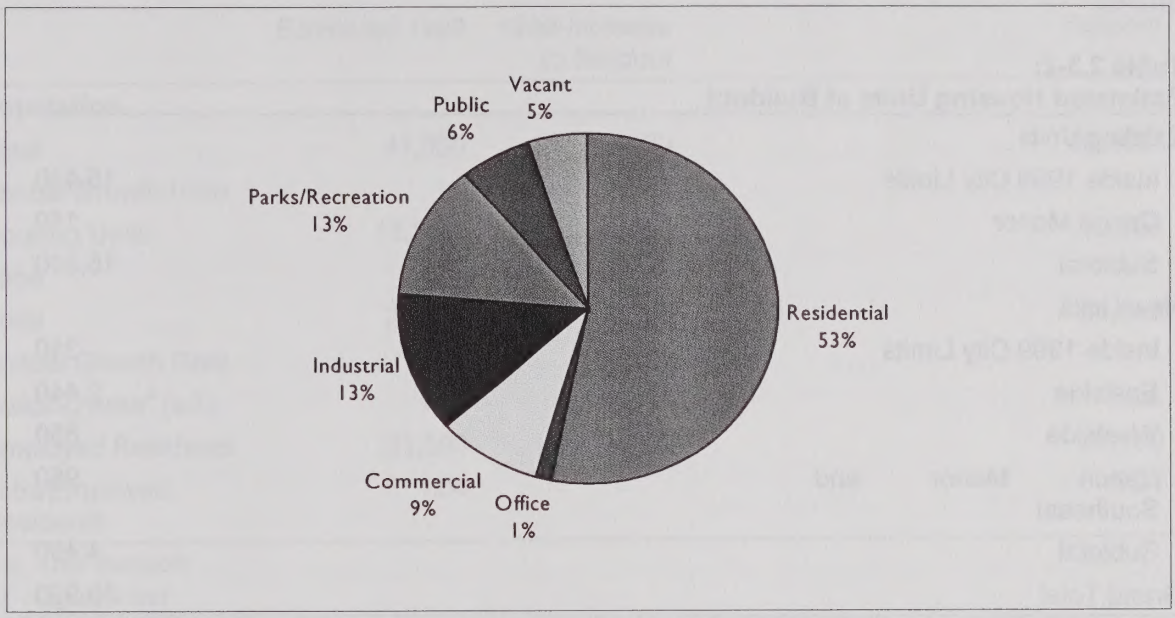
Table 2.3-1:
General Plan Buildout: Net Acreage of New Development

	Inside 1999 City Limits	Eastside	Canon Manor & Southeast	Westside	Total
Residential					
Estate	0	60	210	0	270
Low Density	0	140	70	0	210
Medium Density	0	60	20	0	80
High Density	0	40	0	45	85
Mixed Use	20	30	10	0	60
Commercial	40	0	0	60[1]	100
Industrial	120	0	100	55	275
Office	10	0	0	20	30
Public/Institutional	0	10	0	0	10
Parks/Open Space[2]	2	155	30	3	190
Total	192	495	440	183	1,310

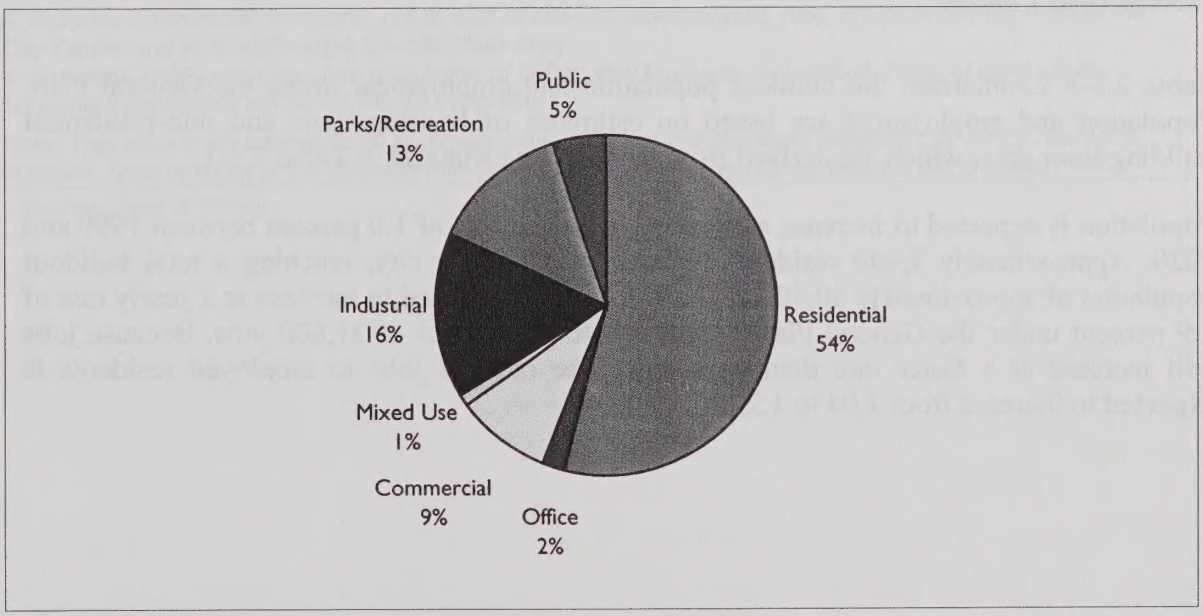
1. Includes 24 acres in the Wilfred/Dowdell specific plan area.
2. Includes neighborhood parks, linear parks, community fields, and creek corridors. The community fields (approximately 50 acres), are located inside the Sphere of Influence, but outside the Urban Growth Boundary.
Note: This table is for informational purposes only, and does not represent adopted City policy related to buildout. Total buildout of the General Plan is neither anticipated by nor specified in the General Plan.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

Figure 2.3-1: Land Uses: 1999 vs. Buildout[1]



Inside City Limits, 1999



Buildout
1. Acreages do not include streets.
2. Parks/Recreation acreage includes the 50-acre community fields.
Source: Dyett & Bhatia

Table 2.3-2 shows the total number of housing units estimated at buildout of all General Plan policies.

Table 2.3-2:
Estimated Housing Units at Buildout

Existing Units	
Inside 1999 City Limits	15,430
Canon Manor	110
Subtotal	15,540
New Units	
Inside 1999 City Limits	210
Eastside	2,440
Westside	850
Canon Manor and Southeast	950
Subtotal	4,450
Grand Total	19,990

Note: This table is for informational purposes only, and does not represent adopted City policy related to buildout. Total buildout of the General Plan is neither anticipated by nor specified in the General Plan.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

Table 2.3-3 summarizes the buildout population and employment under the General Plan. Population and employment are based on estimates of housing units and non-residential building floor area, which are derived from the acreage estimates in Table 2.3-1.

Population is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 1.0 percent between 1999 and 2020. Approximately 9,400 residents will be added to the city, reaching a total buildout population of approximately 50,400. Whereas, jobs are planned to increase at a yearly rate of 1.9 percent under the General Plan, reaching a total buildout of 31,600 jobs. Because jobs will increase at a faster rate than population, the ratio of jobs to employed residents is expected to increase from 1.04 to 1.22.

Table 2.3-3:
General Plan Buildout: Population and Jobs[1]

	Estimated 1999	*1999-Increase to Buildout*	*Buildout*
Population			
Total	41,000	8,400	50,400[4]
Annual Growth Rate		1.0%	
Housing Units	15,540[2]	4,450	19,990
Jobs			
Total	21,900	9,700	31,600
Annual Growth Rate		1.9%	
Building Area[3] (s.f.)	n.a.	4,920,000	n.a.
Employed Residents	21,200	4,800	26,100
Jobs/Employed Residents	1.04		1.21

n.a. – not available

s.f. – square feet

1. Buildout estimates do not include on-campus population or employment for SSU.

2. California Department of Finance, Official State Estimates (January 1999) for Rohnert Park and estimate for Canon Manor; includes 1,466 mobile home units

3. Includes commercial, industrial, office, and mixed-use development. Also, includes development in the City Center and Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan Area.

4. Assumes 1999 group quarters population of 660 to stay the same at buildout. Thus, at buildout, the household population will be 49,740 (50,400-660)

Note: This table is for informational purposes only, and does not represent adopted City policy related to buildout. Total buildout of the General Plan is neither anticipated by nor specified in the General Plan.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

2.4 LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

GOALS: LAND USE

LU-A Maintain a compact urban form, with a defined urban growth boundary and urban development intensities in land designated for urban uses. Work with other agencies to ensure that land surrounding the city is maintained in open space.

LU-B Provide soft urban edges and ensure that designated intensities provide gradual transition to open space at the city edges.

LU-C Promote a balanced land use program and increase the ability of people to live and work in the city.

LU-D Provide for concentrations of activity and mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development in selected areas.

LU-E Encourage development of the City Center as a mixed-use activity center with a range of commercial, residential, and civic uses.

LU-F Create a new mixed-use University District north of Sonoma State University that would draw visitors, serve as a destination point for the City, offer a wide mix of residential and employment opportunities, and foster close physical and visual relationship between the campus and the rest of the City.

LU-G Require preparation of specific plans for strategic new growth areas with complex land use programs.

LU-H Maintain land use patterns that maximize residents' accessibility to parks, open space, and neighborhood shopping centers.

LU-I Provide a range of housing types in type and price, including large-lot homes and housing oriented to students. Provide a variety of housing in all neighborhoods and reserve sites, where appropriate, for housing types that would ensure that Rohnert Park remains an inclusive, community.

LU-J Continue to maintain efficient land use patterns and ensure that infill development maintains the scale and character of established neighborhoods.

LU-K Promote a diverse range of jobs within the city.

POLICIES: LAND USE

The first set of policies in this section addresses the city as a whole, and then policies for Specific Plan areas and other specific areas follow.

For community design policies, see Chapter 3: Community Design.

Use Classifications and Land Use Program

LU-1 Update the City's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations contained in the Municipal Code for consistency with the General Plan, including the General Plan Diagram.

A complete revision of the Zoning Ordinance will be necessary, including, but not limited to:

- *Establishment of new base districts, consistent with the land use classifications in the General Plan;*
- *Establishment of new overlay districts for environmental protection and review processes and base, overlay, or specific plan districts for mixed-use areas;*
- *New development regulations that reflect policy direction contained throughout the General Plan, including design standards in the Community Design Element.*

LU-1A At the time of updating the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map, examine, and update where necessary, the General Plan Diagram and/or the Zoning designation for parcels located within areas of existing development.

The City's previous (as of 2000) Zoning Ordinance allowed alternate land uses in given zoning districts with the approval of a use permit. For example, commercial uses were allowed on land designated for industrial use along Commerce Boulevard and Redwood Drive. This General Plan anticipates that the Zoning Ordinance will be revised including identification of new base zoning districts. It may be necessary to refine the General Plan Diagram and/or Zoning designations in order to implement the goals and policies in this General Plan and ensure that the Zoning Ordinance that is consistent with and implements this General Plan.

LU-2 Require sites designated as Mixed Use—University District, City Center, Southwest Shopping Center, and near Bodway Parkway/Valley House Road—to be developed with a variety of residential and non-residential uses, in accordance with the delineated land use program for the Specific Plan areas in this chapter.

Land Use Pattern

Mixed-use, Commercial, Office, and Industrial Development

LU-3 Develop the University District as a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented center.

Permitted uses are stipulated in the land use classifications in Section 2.2, and specific policies and land use program are included later in this section.

LU-4 Develop the City Center as a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented center.

Permitted uses are stipulated in the land use classifications in Section 2.2.

LU-5 Encourage development of the northwest growth area along Wilfred Avenue and on the area designated as Mixed Use on Bodway Parkway, south of Canon Manor, as mixed-use centers (that is, with different uses at different levels in a building), while permitting single- or multi-use (that is more than one use on the site, but in separate buildings) development.

Encouragement for mixed-use development is built into the General Plan Land Use Classification system, which permits an FAR of 2.0 for mixed-use development that include residential uses, and FAR of 1.5 for projects with a non-residential mix (such as retail and offices). Projects with single use buildings would be subject to the FAR for these individual uses, as included in Section 2.2, which are lower than the FARs stipulated for mixed-use developments. Further incentives would result from reduced parking requirements for mixed-use development that may be included in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

LU-6 Locate new Medium and High Density Residential development adjacent to parks, creekways or other open space, in order to maximize residents' access to recreational uses, or adjacent to a Mixed Use or Neighborhood Commercial Center, to maximize access to services.

LU-7 Encourage new neighborhood commercial facilities and supermarkets to be located to maximize accessibility to all residential areas.

The intent is to ensure that convenience shopping facilities such as supermarkets and drugstores are located close to where people live and facilitate access to these on foot or bicycles. Also, because Rohnert Park's residential population can support only a limited number of supermarkets, this policy will encourage dispersion of supermarkets rather than their clustering in a few locations.

Residential Development

LU-8 Require that residential development projects comply not only with the stipulated maximum density for the range, but the minimum density as well.

Because of limited land supply, it is vital that minimum residential densities are adhered to for achieving General Plan buildout. Maintaining minimum densities is critical not only to achieve the intent of the General Plan Diagram and a balance and variety of housing types, but also to foster a compact urban form, and ensure that services, such as transit, can be provided and access to facilities is maintained. This policy would also mean, as an example, that approval of a residential project at a Low Density Residential range on a site designated Medium Density Residential will require an amendment to the General Plan Diagram.

LU-9 Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance provides for:

- A 5,000 square-foot minimum lot area for areas designated Low Density Residential on the General Plan Diagram.
- *The Zoning Ordinance may permit lots as small as 4,500 square feet in selected areas and under specific conditions.*
- Development standards that permit zero-lot line attached or detached single-family dwellings on sites designated for medium or higher densities in the General Plan; and
- Development standards that do not discourage provision of more local streets.

  While General stipulations of gross (as opposed to net) should take out any disincentives to providing more through streets, minimum lot-size standards in the Zoning Ordinance should be attainable in residential projects that provide through streets every 400 to 500 feet.

LU-10 As part of the Zoning Ordinance, establish the following density bonuses for residential projects:

- Up to 25 percent bonus for projects meeting State-criteria for low- and very-low income housing.

  According to the California Government Code Section 65915, this density bonus shall be applicable to projects with five or more units, when a developer of housing agrees or proposes to construct at least (1) 20 percent of the total units of a housing development for very low income households, as defined in Section 50079.5 of the Health and Safety Code, or (2) 10 percent of the total units of a housing development for very low income

households, as defined in Section 50105 of the Health and Safety Code, or (3) 50 percent of the total dwelling units of a housing development for qualifying residents, as defined in Section 51.3 of the Civil Code. Other provision of the Government Code, such as those relating to affordability, shall also apply.

- 10 percent bonus, upon discretionary approval only, and only for projects undertaking elective off-site improvements (such as streetscape improvements) that further the City's community design and/or open space objectives. This bonus shall not be combinable with affordable housing bonus. Off-site improvements directly resulting from a project's impacts, as specified in the Zoning Ordinance, may still be required; the bonus is for improvements that go beyond the required minimum.

Specific Plan and Other Areas

The new growth areas of the City have been divided into five specific plan areas – Northwest, Northeast, University District, Canon Manor, and Southeast. Policies have been developed that pertain to the individual specific plan areas, as well as for the City Center area, for which a Concept Plan exists. Boundaries for specific plan areas are demarcated in Figure 2.4-1. For policies related to design issues, please see Chapter 3: Community Design.

LU-10A Coordinate the adoption of each specific plan in a manner that provides for the systematic implementation of the General Plan, as is consistent with the growth management and public facilities goals and policies of this General Plan. In order to carry out this policy, the City Council may elect to adopt one specific plan at a time, determine priorities for the adoption of each specific plan, initiate the preparation of a specific plan, or otherwise take action to ensure that the adoption of specific plans adhere to the growth management and public facilities goals and policies of this General Plan.

Require that all specific plans prepared pursuant to this General Plan include the following components:

- A land use program as specified for each Specific Plan area in the General Plan, including the maximum and minimum development for each land use type.
- A detailed traffic study, prepared by a City-approved traffic/transportation planner, and reasonable mitigation measures to mitigate traffic impacts resulting from the development;
- The proposed location and capacity of major infrastructure components, including wells, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste, disposal, energy, and

other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the Specific Plan;

Policy GM-9 also requires preparation of a Public Facilities Financing Plan.

- A site-specific biological assessment of wetlands, habitat areas, and creeksides by a City-approved biologist and a program for conservation/mitigation to the extent feasible;
- Survey for California tiger salamander, both in breeding habitat and adjacent upland estivation habitat, with appropriate mitigation, including avoidance and minimization measures;
- Program for conservation of the natural resources along creeks and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources where applicable; and
- Park and open space in accordance with the General Plan designation, including access and connections to the bicycle system shown in Figure 4-3.
- Hydrology and drainage for the area, with a goal to minimize runoff, and drainage practices to be incorporated as part of individual projects to meet the the specific plan objectives; and
- Plan to prevent stormwater pollution, including measures to be incorporated as part of development on individual sites.
- Demonstration of adequate water supply;

  This demonstration of adequacy should be consistent with policies PF-11 through PF-14, relating to water supply.

LU-10B Include within each specific plan, standards and criteria by which development will be phased and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources.

LU-10C Permit hospitals, schools, police and fire stations, parks and other facilities that serve a vital public interest, subject to findings and necessary environmental review, to be located in a specific plan area, even if a specific plan for the area has not been adopted.

LU-10D As part of development of specific plans, through site planning and other techniques, ensure adequate transitions between incompatible uses, while promoting the General Plan intent of integrated development of compatible uses.

Canon Manor Specific Plan Area

LU-11 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in Canon Manor, with the amount of development controlled by the underlying land use designations.

LU-12 Maintain existing uses in Canon Manor north of Alice Drive. Introduce Low Density Residential uses south of Alice Drive, where few lots have been developed (see Figure 2.2-1: General Plan Diagram).

LU-13A Ensure that uses along Petaluma Hill Road are limited to Open Space, Park and Recreation, or Rural Estate Residential only.

Uses shown on the General Plan Diagram are consistent with this policy. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any future changes to the General Plan Diagram be consistent with the policy.

LU-13B As Part of the preparation of the Canon Manor Specific Plan, develop standards for public facilities that are appropriate for the area.

University District Specific Plan Area

LU-14 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in the University District.

LU-15 Ensure that land uses are dispersed in accordance with the following principles (see also Figure 2.2-1):

- A 20-40 acre mixed-use center, located directly adjacent to Sonoma State University;
- A minimum 8-12 acre "commercial core" as part of the mixed-use center. This core will have continuous ground level retail, personal services, eating and drinking establishments, and other similar operations that are pedestrian oriented. Residential, office, and other compatible uses shall be permitted on upper floors. This core shall be directly visible and accessible from Rohnert Park Expressway and, for pedestrian safety and traffic considerations, be located only north of the Expressway.
- No retail uses outside of the "commercial core."
- The intent is to promote a concentration of activity and continuity of retail uses.
- A plaza at the center of the commercial core.

See also Chapter 3: Community Design for design policies related to this.

- A 12-15 acre north-south linear park, in the general location shown in Figure 2.2-1.

  See Chapter 3: Community Design for policies related to design of the linear park.

- Approximately 35 to 45 acres of High Density Residential development immediately adjacent to the comercial core or along the linear park. This High Density Residential development need not be in a continous uniform width band around the commercial core; however all High Density Residential development in the area shall be adjacent to the core.
- Medium Density Residential development around the commercial core/High Density Residential uses.
- A variety of housing types, including single-family residences, along Rohnert Park Expressway.
- Along the western specific plan area boundary, between Hinebaugh and Copeland Creeks, a buffer setback of 100 feet shall be maintained and new residential development adjacent to and east of the buffer shall be single story.

LU-16 Ensure that the land use program is within the ranges indicated on Table 2.4-1, including the minimum and maximum number of units for each residential land use classification.

Table 2.4-1: Land Use Program: University District Specific Plan Area

	Gross Acreage[1]	*Housing Units Minimum-Maximum*	*Building Area (1,000 s.f.) Minimum-Maximum*
Rural Estate Residential	12-18	20-25	-
Low Density Residential	45-55	245-295	-
Medium Density Residential	55-65	510-560	-
High Density Residential	35-45	570-630	-
Mixed Use	20-40	70-100	250-350
Parks			
Plaza	1-2	-	-
Linear Park	12-15	-	-
Open Space			
Copeland Creek (north side)	2-5	-	-
Crane Creek (south side)	15-20	-	-
Hinebaugh Creek	15-25	-	-
Petaluma Hill Road Buffer	20-35	-	-
Total	300	1,415-1,610	250-350

1. Excludes acreage for the Rohnert Park Expressway between the easterly City limits and Petaluma Hill Road, and Keiser Avenue.

(Rev. 11/00)

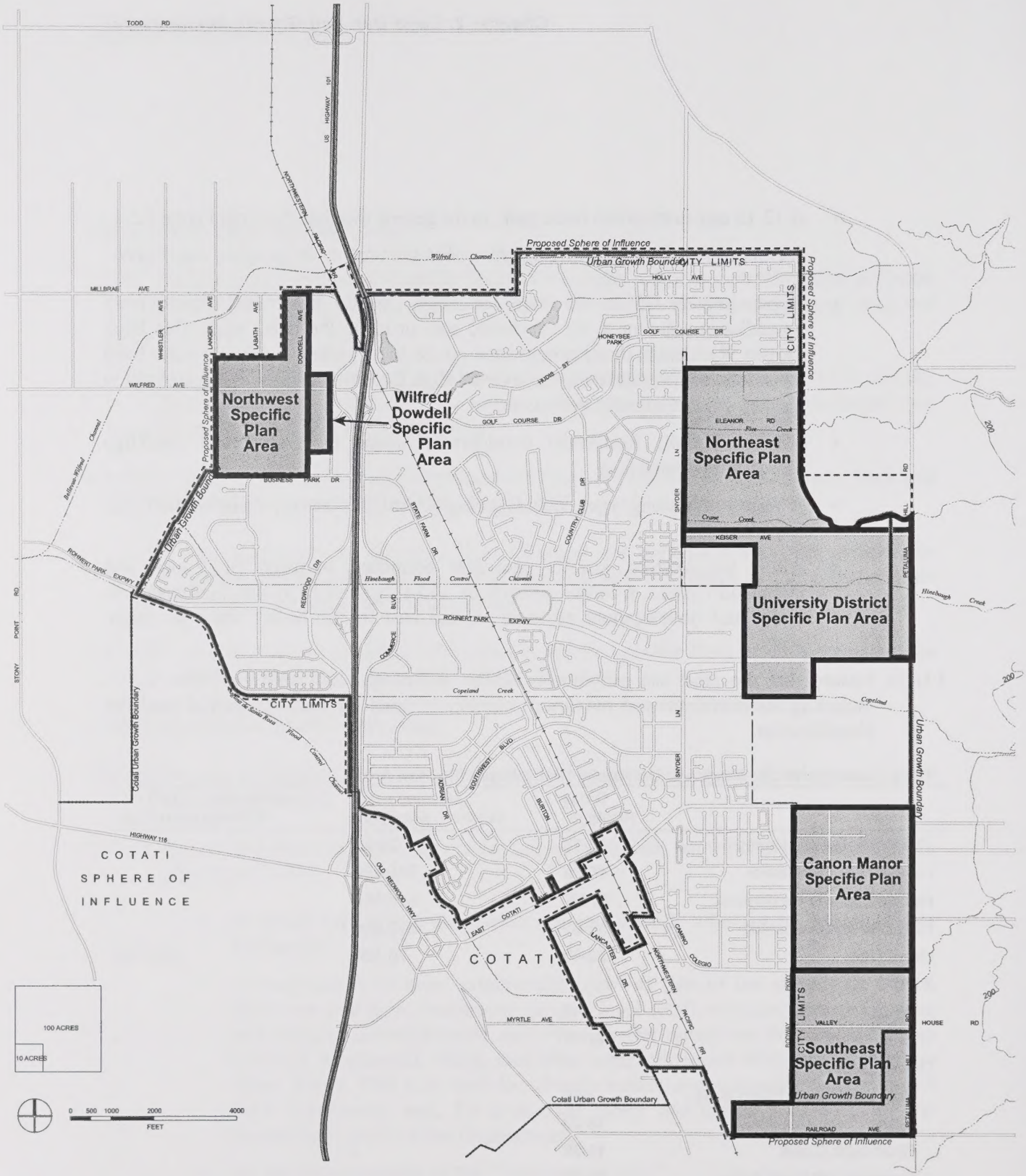


Figure 2.4-1

Specific Plan Areas

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

LU-17 As part of the project approval process, require development of the non-residential component of the land use program as a condition of residential development, with phasing and intermediate check points to ensure that land uses are balanced at intermediate stages in the development process.

LU-18 Require the Specific Plan to incorporate a plan for pedestrian, bicycle, and auto connections from Rohnert Park Expressway across Copeland Creek and into SSU to integrate the University with the mixed-use area.

Northwest Specific Plan Area

LU-19 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in the Northwest Area.

LU-20 Ensure that the Specific Plan is in accordance with the development range outlined in Table 2.4-2:

Table 2.4-2:
Land Use Program: Northwest Specific Plan Area

	Gross Acreage	*Housing Units Minimum-Maximum*	*Non-residential Building Area (1,000 s.f.) Minimum-Maximum*
High Density Residential	40-50	800-900	-
Commercial	40-50	-	450-480
Office	15-25	-	230-260
Industrial	55-65	-	520-560
Parks	2-4		
Total	170	800-900	1,200-1,300

LU-21 As part of land use planning for the area, ensure that:

- Dowdell Avenue is not fronted by residential uses;
- The western fringe of the site fronted by residential uses, with maximum views of the surrounding open space from individual units. Residential uses can also be located in the interior of the area adjacent or in mix with the designated Commercial uses;

- Commercial and industrial developments provide adequate transition to residential areas, and industrial developments incorporate a landscaped visual buffer at the residential edges; and
- A minimum of 2 to 4 acres of parkland is provided, either in the Specific Plan area, or immediately adjacent open space areas to the west.

Southeast Specific Plan Area

LU-22 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in the southeast area.

The Specific Plan shall include a neighborhood park approximately five to eight acres in size, as specified in OS-12. Development shall be in accordance with the development program outlined in Table 2.4-3.

Table 2.4-3:
Land Use Program: Southeast Specific Plan Area

	Gross Acreage	*Housing Units Minimum-Maximum*	*Non-residential Building Area (1,000 s.f.) Minimum-Maximum*
Rural / Estate Residential	22-28	30-50	
Low Density Residential	28-32	145-165	
Medium Density Residential	18-22	180-220	
Mixed-Use Development	10-14	55-75	180-220
Industrial	92-104		Governed by underlying FAR for Industrial Uses (Table 2.2-1)
Open Space	95-105		
Parks	5-8		
Total	274	410-510	

LU-23 Permit neighborhood-oriented retail, offices, financial, business and personal services, and other similar neighborhood-compatible uses.

LU-24 Permit a maximum FAR of 0.4 for retail-only development, and 1.0 for mixed use development.

LU-25 *Only land devoted to non-residential uses shall be counted towards establishing the non-residential FAR requirements.*Allow residential uses, as long as they do not front Bodway Parkway.

LU-26 Allow the Mixed Use area to be developed with a mix of residential and commercial uses, or with either one of those uses without the other.

Northeast Specific Plan Area

LU-27 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in the Northeast area.

LU-28 Require that development in the Northeast Specific Plan area be in accordance with the development program outlined in Table 2.4-4.

Table 2.4-4:
Land Use Program: Northeast Specific Plan Area

	Gross Acreage	*Housing Units Minimum-Maximum*
Rural / Estate Residential	25-30	40-60
Low Density Residential	110-125	575-635
Medium Density Residential	10-14	100-140
High Density Residential	11-14	200-250
Parks	12	
Total	170	915-1,085

LU-29 Ensure that the Northeast Specific Plan incorporate the following features:

- An approximately 8-acre park located southeast of Snyder Lane/Eleanor Road directly adjacent to either Snyder Lane or the Five Creek greenway;
- Greenway along Five Creek;
- One-way couplet along the greenway, with on-street parking on both sides of each one-way street;
- Medium and High Density Residential grouped along the Five Creek greenway or the 8-acre park, with access from the couplet. Medium and High Density Residential development shall be at least 200 feet away from the edge of the Snyder Lane right-of-way;
- 100-foot wide buffer or parkway on the south side of G Section; and
- Linear park along the eastside of Snyder Lane.

  See policy CD-7 that explains this park in detail.

City Center

LU-30 Prepare and adopt a City Center Concept Plan to guide development and redevelopment in the City Center area.

The City Center area is generally defined by Hinebaugh Creek on the north, the railroad tracks to the east, the Rohnert Park Expressway to the south, and U.S. Highway 101 to the west. The City Center would be an area of mixed land uses including civic buildings, commercial businesses, office uses, and multifamily housing. It would include approximately 180 housing units.

LU-31 Allow, but do not require, mixed- or multi-use development.

Wilfred-Dowdell

LU-32 Ensure development is in accordance with the adopted Specific Plan for the area.

LU-33 In preparing and adopting the Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan, incorporate provisions which ensure integration of land uses and design concepts with the adjacent Northwest Specific Plan area.

Outside the Urban Growth Boundary

LU-34 Areas in the City Planning area, outside the Urban Growth Boundary, should be maintained in agricultural and open space uses consistent with the land use designation in the Sonoma County General Plan.

2.5 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Management and predictability of growth emerged as one of the salient issues that Rohnert Park residents would like the General Plan to address. Based on community workshops held in 1999, the Ad Hoc Oversight Committee established objectives for the General Plan, which included a 20-year UGB and managed and predictable growth (see Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview). Growth management policies are designed to balance competing interests, including the need for additional housing and related development, and the expressed community desires to preserve open space, maintain community character, and ensure adequate public facilities.

Management of growth does not mean curtailing it, but rather structuring it to ensure that it is not haphazard and supports broader planning objectives. As of 2000, Rohnert Park used several conventional growth management tools, including zoning and subdivision regulations and development impact fees. Several other Sonoma County cities have some form of additional growth management or growth control provisions.

The overall amount and location of growth is addressed in the land use policies of this element (see Sections 2.3 and 2.4). This section outlines the framework to phase and pace growth so as to minimize its environmental, social, and fiscal impacts, and ensure concurrency between growth and infrastructure and services. It also outlines policies relating to City boundaries and annexation, and for coordination with other local and regional agencies.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

The City will coordinate with State and County agencies for transportation improvements and water and wastewater services. Caltrans is responsible for improvements to US 101, and the Sonoma County Department of Public Works is currently responsible for Petaluma Hill Road and other county roads. The Sonoma County Water Agency supplies water to the city from the Russian River, and the City of Santa Rosa manages the Subregional Wastewater Disposal System (see Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities Element).

GOALS: GROWTH MANAGEMENT

GM-A Recognize the availability of housing as a vital issue of statewide importance. Cooperate with other local governments and the State in addressing regional housing needs, and balance regional and State considerations with the community's interest in

preserving Rohnert Park's quiet, safe, small-town feeling and desire for carefully planned and managed growth.[3]

Housing is addressed in greater detail in the Housing Element.

GM-B Undertake efforts to facilitate provision of housing affordable to low- and very-low income households by exempting affordable housing from any numerical "trigger cap" restrictions.

Because regional housing needs are escalating the cost of housing, it is vital that provision of affordable housing remains a priority for the City. This policy also clarifies that while affordable housing projects are exempt from "trigger caps", they are still subject to the other growth management provisions.

GM-C Ensure that growth is paced to achieve General Plan buildout over a 20-year period, representing an annual average population growth rate of one percent.

GM-D Maintain a balance of land uses and a variety of housing types over time.

GM-E Promote contiguous urban development and maintain a compact form over successive stages of the city's development.

GM-F Ensure all new development provides necessary public facilities to support the development.

GM-G Require all urban development in the Rohnert Park Planning Area to be located within the Urban Growth Boundary; prohibit urban development outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

GM-H Minimize the impacts—physical, visual, and fiscal—of growth and annexation on existing homes and businesses.

POLICIES: GROWTH MANAGEMENT

For policies related to the Community Separators, see Chapter 6: Conservation.

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[3] See *Land Use Alternatives and Preferred Plan; May 1999*; page 3:

"Based on the input at these forums, it was clear that people don't neatly fit into pre-conceived categories; very few are either vehemently "pro- or anti-growth". Most people understand the inevitability of some growth, however, the great majority favor slow, managed growth that is carefully planned in ways that:

☐Maintains a diverse, quiet, safe, small-town, family-friendly feel; …"

GM-1 Prepare and adopt a Growth Management Ordinance that implements policies in this Element.

The Growth Management Ordinance shall establish a detailed program that implements the various policies in this element. Very-low and low-income housing shall be exempted from the numerical limitation provisions of the ordinance.

Phasing and Pace of Development

GM-2 A Twenty-Year (Year 2020) Urban Growth Boundary is established in accordance with ballot Measure N (2000) as follows:

Section 1. Purpose and Findings.

1.1 This measure reaffirms and readopts the City of Rohnert Park's commitment to planned growth through the designation of an urban growth boundary. This measure establishes the City of Rohnert Park's Urban Growth Boundary ("UGB") as depicted on the map shown in Figures 2.2-1 and 2.5-2 as the area within which the City generally projects that development will occur within a specified period. Until June 30, 2020, the UGB shall be changed only by a vote of the people, except in certain circumstances and according to specific procedures set forth in this measure.

1.2 Encouraging a cohesive pattern of urbanization. Adoption of a UGB will encourage a cohesive pattern of urbanization by (1) promoting efficient and orderly growth patterns; (2) supporting stability and certainty in long term planning by advancing the concept of planned growth; and (3) ensuring that lands outside the UGB are not prematurely or unnecessarily converted to urban uses.

1.3 Protecting what is unique about Rohnert Park. The City of Rohnert Park is bordered to the east and to the west by unincorporated lands that are dominated by hills, farms, and fields. This unincorporated landscape is enjoyed by the persons who work and live in Rohnert Park and forms a part of the environment of Rohnert Park even though it is outside the city limits. Adoption of a UGB will preserve and protect this aspect of Rohnert Park by requiring urbanization to stop where the unincorporated landscape begins.

1.4 This General Plan Amendment is not intended to prevent the City from meeting its obligation under state housing or zoning and planning law. The City's Housing Element, including the sites identified therein for housing, and the programs and activities adopted to promote and encourage the development of housing, will allow the City of Rohnert Park to meet its

obligations for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. This measure establishing a UGB is consistent with the objectives of the City's Housing Element and with the other mandatory elements of the City's General Plan. It is fully expected that the policies and programs in the City's Housing Element, including the sites identified therein for housing, will allow the City of Rohnert Park to meet the requirements of State law to provide housing opportunities for all economic segments of the community. This measure allows the City Council to bring land into the UGB without a public vote for very low and low income housing only, in recognition of the fact that sometimes it is necessary for a local government to take special steps to provide opportunities for very low and low income housing.

1.5 The UGB outlines the area within which the City generally projects that development will occur within the next twenty years. However, the General Plan of the City of Rohnert Park Growth Management Policies prohibit growth from commencing, if the necessary public facilities – streets, water, wastewater, solid waste, and parks – are not in place when the growth is completed. In addition, the General Plan of the City of Rohnert Park Specific Plan Policies require that new growth will not be permitted unless and until the specific plan for the area in which the growth is proposed, has been adopted.

Section 2. Establishing the Urban Growth Boundary

The following policies shall apply to the Urban Growth Boundary:

2.1 No urban development shall be permitted beyond the Urban Growth Boundary. "Urban development" shall mean development requiring one or more basic municipal services including, but not limited to, water service, sewer, improved storm drainage facilities, fire hydrants and other physical public facilities and services; provided, however, that open space uses, parks, agricultural uses, community fields and golf courses beyond the Urban Growth Boundary that are provided with municipal or public services, shall not be defined as "urban development."

2.2 The Urban Growth Boundary shall be in effect until June 30, 2020.

2.3 The Urban Growth Boundary may be amended only by a vote of the people or as provided for in Section 2.4.

2.4 The Urban Growth Boundary may be amended by a majority vote (three affirmative votes) of the City Council under the following circumstances:

2.4.1 Affordable Housing. To comply with state law regarding the provision of housing for low and very-low income families, the City Council may amend the Urban Growth Boundary in order to include within the UGB, lands to be developed primarily (51%) for low and very-low income families provided, however:

(a) An amendment to the UGB pursuant to this Section 2.4.1 may not be made earlier than January 1, 2015;

(b) No more than 10 acres may be brought into the UGB in any calendar year;

(c) If in any year, fewer than 10 acres are brought within the UGB, then the unused increment, up to a maximum of 5 acres, may be brought within the UGB in a subsequent year;

(d) Such amendment may be adopted only if the City Council makes each of the following findings:

(i) That the land is immediately adjacent to comparably developed areas;

(ii) That there is no existing residentially designated land available within the UGB that can feasibly accommodate the proposed development;

(iii) That it is not reasonably feasible to accommodate the proposed development by redesignating lands within the UGB for housing;

(iv) That there has been an application submitted to provide housing primarily for low and very-low income families, and the applicant has provided substantial evidence that sufficient and adequate capacity is available in all city services and facilities, all school district facilities, and any other relevant public agency facilities, to accommodate the proposed development.

(v) That the application to provide housing primarily for low and very-low income families is consistent with GM-4 in General Plan 2000.

For purposes of this section, the concept of "feasibility" shall include considerations of market feasibility, environmental feasibility, and other rules and regulations affecting the development of the property.

2.4.2 To adjust the UGB exclusively for the purpose of protecting agricultural or open space lands.

2.4.3 To add lands exclusively to protect natural resources.

2.4.4 To add lands exclusively to be maintained as public parks or public open space.

2.4.5 To add lands to provide exclusively for the disposal of treated wastewater and/or sewage treatment and disposal use.

2.5 This General Plan Amendment is not intended, and shall not be applied or construed, to authorize the City to exercise its powers in a manner which will take private property for public use without the payment of just compensation. This General Plan Amendment will be interpreted, applied and implemented so as to accomplish its purposes to the maximum permissible extent, by all constitutional means. If the application of this General Plan Amendment to a specific property would take private property for public use without the payment of just compensation ("taking"), then the City Council may take any action necessary to avoid a taking.

2.6 This General Plan Amendment is not intended, and shall not apply to any development project that has obtained as of the effective date of Resolution No. 2000-152, a vested right pursuant to state law.

Section 3. Amending the General Plan to Manage Growth within the Urban Growth Boundary

3.1 The UGB establishes the area within which urban development will be contained until the year 2020. This limitation restricts development to lands within the UGB. Such restriction is necessary to implement and to be consistent with the following community goals:

3.1.1 Efficient and orderly growth patterns.

3.1.2 A well-designed mix of residential, commercial, business park, and open space uses, featuring a pedestrian-oriented community focal point with a small town, village-like character.

3.1.3 Stability and certainty in long term planning through planned growth.

3.1.4 Adequate and efficient delivery of public services and facilities.

In order to manage development within the UGB in a manner that is consistent with these community goals, a growth management program shall be adopted that includes each of the following components:

3.2.1 An annual standard to determine the number of residential development approvals that are consistent with the goals and policies of the City's General Plan.

3.2.2 A requirement to implement the growth management program, including the annual standard in a manner that is consistent with the goals, objectives, obligations and policies of the City's Land Use and Housing Elements.

3.2.3. An average approximate one percent (1%) annual population growth rate.

3.2.4. An annual review by the City Council to determine the consistency of each of the components of the growth management program with the goals, plans, and policies of the General Plan and State housing, planning, and zoning law.

3.2.5 A requirement to coordinate the development in each of the specific plan areas with the growth management ordinance.

Housing that is affordable to very low and low income households shall be exempt from the growth management program.

GM-3 Establish a "trigger cap" on annual residential development approvals with the following characteristics, in order to maintain an average development pace of 225 housing units per year for any three-year period:

- If the combined number of residential development approvals in any two successive calendar years exceeds 560 housing units, and if the development pace for the preceding three-year period has exceeded an average of 225 housing units per year, then a cap on development on the following calendar year will be established ("trigger cap");

  Based on an average approximate population growth rate of 1%, General Plan buildout would permit an addition of approximately 4,450 housing units over a 20-year period, or an average of approximately 225 housing units per year. The figure 560 represents 125 percent of the two-year average growth of 450 (225 x 2) housing units.

- The "trigger cap" may be adjusted up or down a maximum of ten (10) percent by the City Council on an annual basis (see GM-4) to accommodate changes in land use program assumptions (for example, vacancy rate factors and household size).

- The "trigger cap" will remain in effect as long as needed to ensure that housing approvals in any consecutive three-year period does not exceed a total of 675 (or an average of 225 per year);
- Housing that is affordable to low- and very-low income households shall not be included in the total housing counts when the trigger cap is in place; and
- The Growth Management Element will include a mechanism to take into account two or more years of no residential approvals.

The "trigger cap" will help ensure predictable growth. Like annual growth caps, it will help average out growth from year to year, but will allow both the City and the developers greater flexibility in timing for their projects and support predictability. The definition of affordable housing for the purpose of this General Plan shall be consistent with the State definition.

GM-4 Undertake an annual policy review of the "trigger cap" and establish priorities for the coming year, including priority development areas and allocation of "trigger cap" to specific housing types and/or densities.

The annual review shall include, but not be limited to, consideration of the goal of a one percent average annual population growth rate, a balanced land use program, accommodation of the City's fair-share housing allocations, development patterns and growth area priorities, infrastructure availability, and land use program assumptions (for example, vacancy rate factors and household size). The number of permitted housing units under the "trigger cap" shall be established annually by the City Council within the ten (10) percent range permitted in GM-3.

GM-5 In determining preference for allocation of development approval in case demand for residential approvals exceeds availability, ensure that projects with affordable housing components that go beyond the minimum receive adequate preference.

Policy GM-3 exempts housing affordable to low- and very-low income households from the trigger cap. This policy would ensure that housing projects that have both market rate and affordable components receive adequate preference (as one of the several criteria) over projects that do not have any affordable housing component.

GM-6 Require that new development be contiguous with existing or approved development or that development is located within 1,000 feet of City limits existing at the time, in order to obtain development approval.

Providing public facilities for contiguous sites is less costly, thereby reducing the costs of infrastructure development for both the developer and the City.

GM-7 Encourage applicants to enter into development agreements with the City, which would also grant vested development rights, including against any changes that may result from the City Council annual policy review (GM-4), to develop a site over a multi-year period. Do not enter into any development agreement for a project until a specific plan has been prepared and adopted by the City.

This would permit, but not require, the City to enter into development agreements. Any proposed development agreement shall be consistent with the General Plan, any other relevant plans, policies, programs, regulations, and standards.

GM-8 For those residential development approvals that do not require the approval of a tentative subdivision map, or otherwise not vested through a development agreement with the City, approvals shall expire after a 24-month period, unless extended for special circumstances by the City Council.

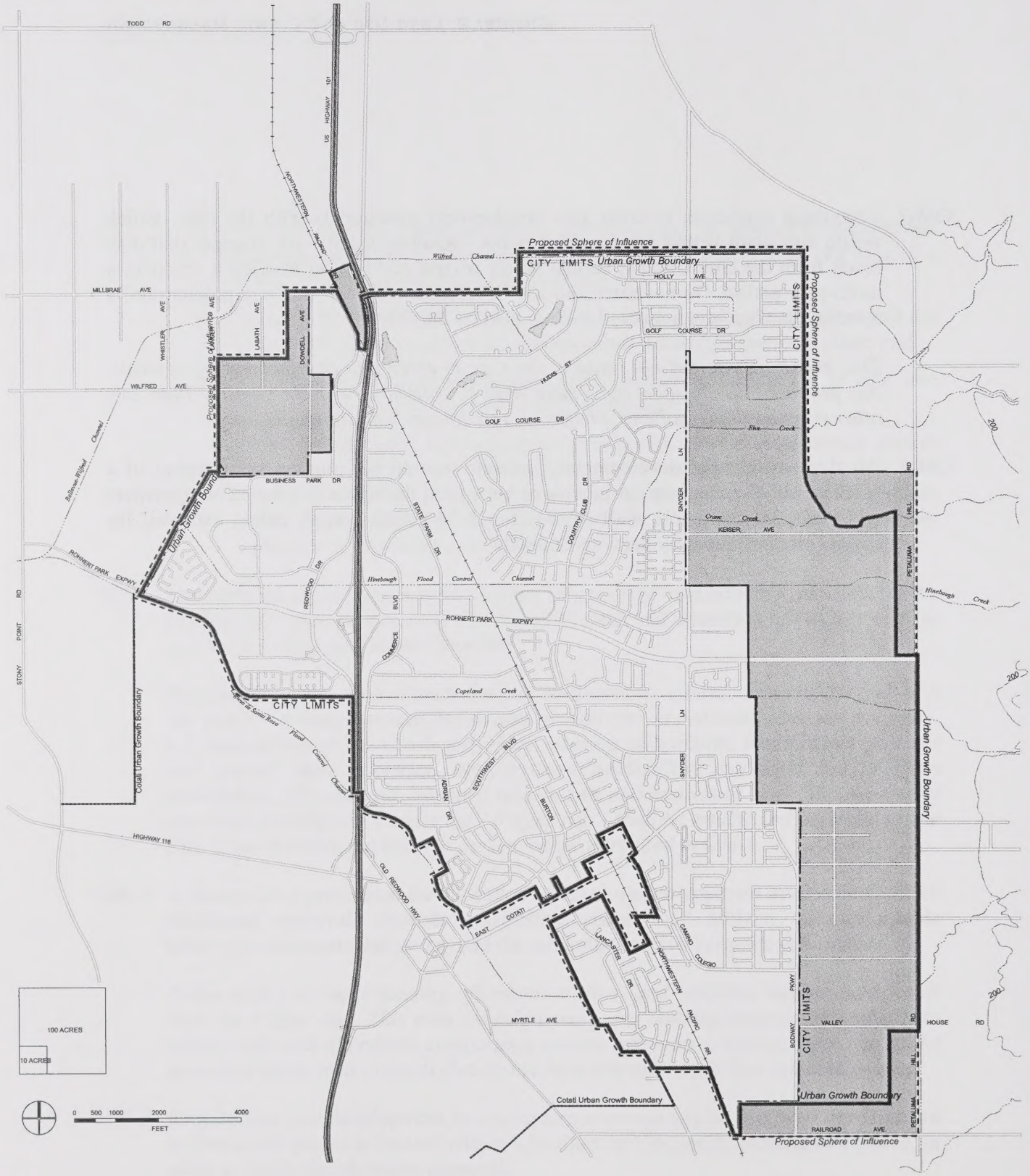

Figure 2.5-2

Urban Growth Boundary and Annexation Areas

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Adequate Public Facilities

GM-9 Require that each specific plan include a Public Facilities Financing Plan that explains how streets, water, wastewater, solid waste, and parks, all meeting City standards, will be provided to the project. The Plan must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the City Manager, based upon criteria developed in the Growth Management Ordinance, that completion of all necessary public facilities concurrently with completion of the specific plan is economically, physically, and legally feasible.

GM-10 Require that economic, physical and legal feasibility (Policy GM-9) include the method of financing or otherwise paying for the facilities and the plan for receiving approval of all regulatory agencies. A Public Facilities Plan that provides for the project's fair share of the financing for the necessary public facilities, but does not provide for the completion of the public facilities prior to completion of the development due to lack of contribution by other responsible parties, will be deemed complete but will not be approved as part of development project approval unless the exceptions included in GM-11 or GM-12 apply.

GM-11 Allow, only with the approval of the City Council, some required public facilities (GM-9) to be deferred for a specific time period by adopting a Statement of Public Policy Considerations. The Statement of Public Policy Considerations shall include findings that specific and offsetting community goals and objectives are achieved by the project that balance not meeting the goal of providing necessary public facilities concurrently with development and shall specify a time period in which the improvements must be completed. Such findings shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record of the public hearing.

GM-12 As provided in GM-10, the City Council may allow an exception to the requirement that all public facilities must be provided prior to completion of the development for streets/highways/intersections only, for projects subject to a development agreement if it can be demonstrated that although adequate street/highway/intersections are unable to be provided for the development at the time occupancy is projected, such facilities will be provided within two years of the time occupancy is projected. The determination that such facilities will be provided within two years of the time occupancy is projected shall be based upon the approved Public Facilities Financing Plans submitted by other projects that contribute to the need for the street/highway/intersection improvement.

GM-13 Require that new development maintain parkways, creeksides, and open spaces that are part of the development or are required to support it, and consider establishing multi-purpose assessment districts or other financing mechanism in order to assign the cost of infrastructure improvements equitably to benefiting sites.

Assessment districts include all property that would receive a special benefit from a capital improvement and then imposes assessments on each parcel of property. The amount of the assessment reflects the cost of the proportional special benefit conferred on the parcel.

The City already uses assessment districts in certain areas for roadway improvements, as along Redwood Drive. Assessment districts can be considered not only for roadway improvements, but also for sewer and water line improvements, and other necessary infrastructure. Expansion of sewer lines east of the existing City limits will probably be necessary in order to accommodate new development.

In addition to infrastructure improvements, assessment districts can be used to assign the cost of maintenance of open spaces and parkways. The cost of additional service above existing costs can be determined by estimating the amount of additional personnel and equipment necessary to maintain response times and service levels.

GM-14 Require new development to dedicate land to the City in the appropriate amount and location for parks and recreational space, in accordance with the General Plan Diagram, the Specific Plan for the area, and the City's park dedication requirements.

The Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities Element establishes standards for the amount of parkland per 1,000 residents and discusses the relevant provisions of the Quimby Act.

GM-15 Prepare, adopt, and implement a Capital Improvement Program (CIP), based on established performance standards, to provide a framework to undertake necessary citywide public facility improvements. Ensure that the program reflects expected growth and estimated cost of improvements.

As of 1999, the City did not have a CIP, but had considered establishing a program in order to prioritize improvement projects and funding. The City needs both a programming time horizon (such as five or seven years) as well as an update cycle (such as every year or two years). Many cities work with a five-year CIP that is updated every year or two years. The Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) uses a seven-year planning horizon and two-year update cycle for its CIP, which is used by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to prepare the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The CIP's estimate of future growth shall take into account development trends and projects in the development pipeline "trigger cap" and other growth management provisions.

Land Use Balance

GM-16 As part of preparation and approval of specific plans and any other implementing ordinances, regulations and development agreements, and allocation of development entitlements for areas of new development, balance non-residential development with residential development over the different phases and require that the contemplated balance of housing types is attained at buildout.

The land use program for each area, including housing units by density range, is included in Section 2.4.

Annexation

GM-17 Consider initiating annexation of Canon Manor Specific Plan Area only if the following conditions are met:

- Adequate public facilities, meeting Rohnert Park's Rural Estate Residential standards established for the area, established either separately or as a part of the Specific Plan, are installed prior to annexation, or a program do so, with secure funding sources, is established to the City's satisfaction;
- No facility improvement costs are borne by the City of Rohnert Park; and
- All land in Canon Manor is included in the annexation.

Canon Manor shall be deemed to have provided the adequate public facilities when all sites within Canon Manor meet established standards for water, wastewater, streets, lighting, fire hydrants, and other public facilities and services.

GM-18 Explore the feasibility of annexation of the Sonoma State University campus.

Land uses and growth areas in the General Plan have been designated to foster a close relationship between the City and SSU. Implementation of the General Plan should result in close physical integration of the campus with the City's neighborhoods; extension of City limits to reflect the extent of contiguous urban limits is only natural. The City currently provides water and wastewater to the campus.

SSU remains perhaps the only campus in the California State University system that is not a part of the surrounding community. Annexation will not alter the University's ability to pursue its development efforts; however, the City would moderately benefit by getting a small share of the existing taxes on retail sales at the campus.

Inter-Agency Coordination

GM-19 Work with Sonoma State University to establish a planning group to coordinate access and development.

Coordination will become increasingly important as urban development embraces the campus' northern edge. The location of campus entryways needs to be coordinated with the City's nearby access improvements, including new streets, roadway and intersection improvements, parks, pedestrian walkways, bicycle routes. Also, long-range planning and development on the SSU campus, including potential expansion of the SSU campus, should be coordinated with land use policies and development in adjacent areas. The timing of on-campus housing development, if any, also needs to be coordinated with adjacent off-campus housing development.

GM-20 Work with Sonoma County to ensure that all land in the Planning Area outside Rohnert Park's Urban Growth Boundary is preserved as open space.

GM-21 Request that the County allow City review and comment on development proposals submitted to the County on unincorporated land in the Rohnert Park Planning Area.

GM-22 Encourage Santa Rosa to designate land within the Wilfred Channel Community Separator and adjacent to it as open space.

Santa Rosa's current General Plan (in 1999) permits development of land within the separator to the north of Wilfred Channel and up to approximately one mile north, as well as the "triangle" immediately north of the channel between the Northern Pacific Railroad and US 101, with Very Low Density Residential uses (up to two housing units per acre).

GM-23 Continue joint city / county efforts, such as the Policy-Makers Working Group, to address the Community Separator mitigation issue.

Implementation Monitoring

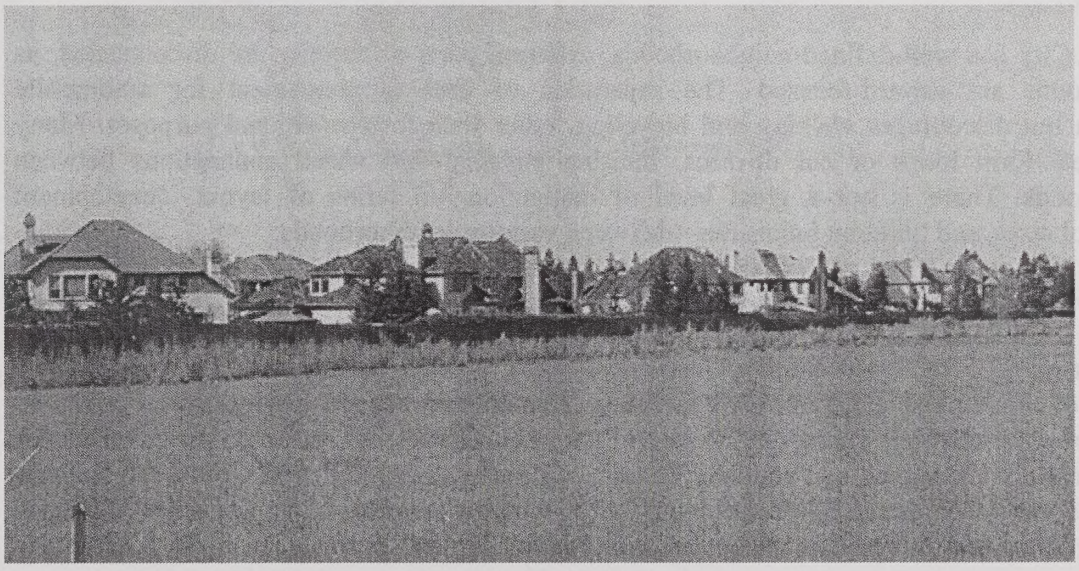
GM-24 Undertake periodic review to monitor General Plan implementation, with the first review scheduled to occur within three years of Plan adoption.

The components of the review are spelled out in detail on page 1-13. This review, which is in addition to the annual report required by the State, should incorporate use of Performance Indicators – such as average trip time, total vehicle hours traveled, jobs/housing balance, park space per resident.

3 Community Design

This Element includes goals and policies aimed at protecting and enhancing Rohnert Park's physical and visual character. Community design issues are addressed at citywide, neighborhood, and street scales. While reinforcing the positive attributes of Rohnert Park's urban structure—such as a compact form and well-defined neighborhoods—the Element seeks to foster creation of distinctive centers to enhance the city's identity, and promote pedestrian and community orientation of new development.

The Element also includes policies for increasing neighborhood connectivity and enhancing the visual quality of urban edges. It includes a comprehensive set of measures to preserve the scenic qualities and views from corridors, including goals and policies pertaining to setbacks, street and block patterns in areas of new development, landscaping, streetscapes, and building massing.



3.1 URBAN FORM, VIEWS, AND EDGES

URBAN FORM AND STRUCTURE

Neighborhood Unit

Rohnert Park was established in 1956 as a master planned community, based on the concept of "neighborhood units." Single-family residences are clustered around a centrally located school and park, creating quiet neighborhoods amenable to families and children. Golf courses, railroads, and US 101 provide strong boundaries to many neighborhoods. Commercial facilities are at the edge of neighborhoods, typically at intersections of major streets, and are primarily accessed by car. This neighborhood unit model of development has essentially served as the city's blueprint since inception.

Connections

While the City has well-defined neighborhoods, different parts of the city are disconnected, as neighborhoods are inward-focused. The separation of uses is convenient for automobile circulation but discourages walking and bicycling, other than for recreational purposes. Many local streets form loops or cul de sacs, limiting physical and visual connections between neighborhoods. There is not a great level of distinction—in terms of layout, development patterns, lot sizes, and building intensities—between various neighborhoods.

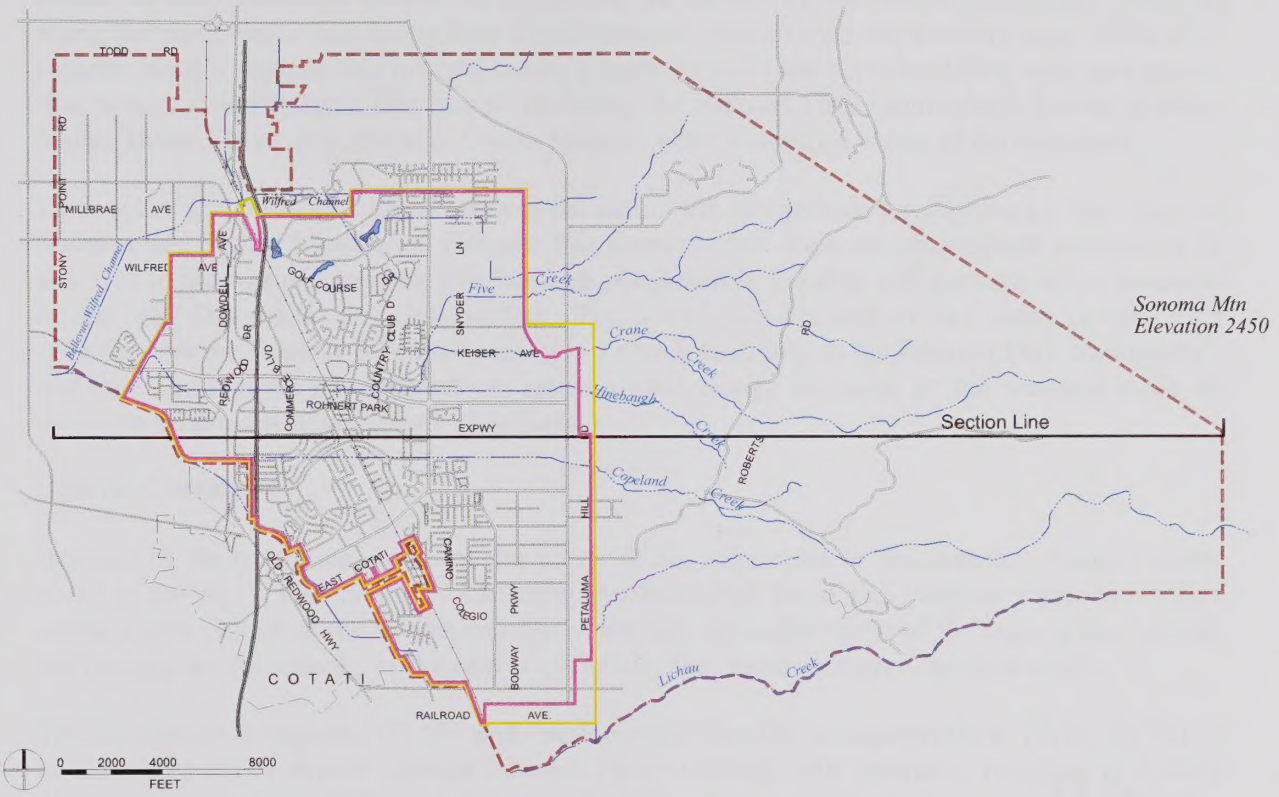
Focal Points

With the exception of Sonoma State University (SSU), located outside the City limits, and a scattering of commercial and community facilities, Rohnert Park has few citywide focal points. In addition, being a relatively young city, Rohnert Park has no traditional pedestrian-oriented center, as in other older cities such as Petaluma, Sonoma, or Santa Rosa. The area around the Rohnert Park Expressway-Commerce Boulevard intersection, where a majority of the city's neighborhood retail development is clustered, is the city's major activity center.

VIEWS

Ridgelines

The eastern ridgelines constitute a prominent feature of the Rohnert Park landscape. Two peaks are prominent – Taylor Mountain, with an elevation of about 1,400 feet, and Sonoma Mountain with an elevation of 2,300 feet. Due to the height of the ridges and the low building heights throughout the city (generally two stories or lower), the eastern ridges are visible from many streets, parks, and open spaces, as well as buildings, throughout Rohnert Par. Ridgelines are depicted in Figure 3.1-1.



Planning Area

20-Year Urban Growth Boundary

Proposed Sphere of Influence

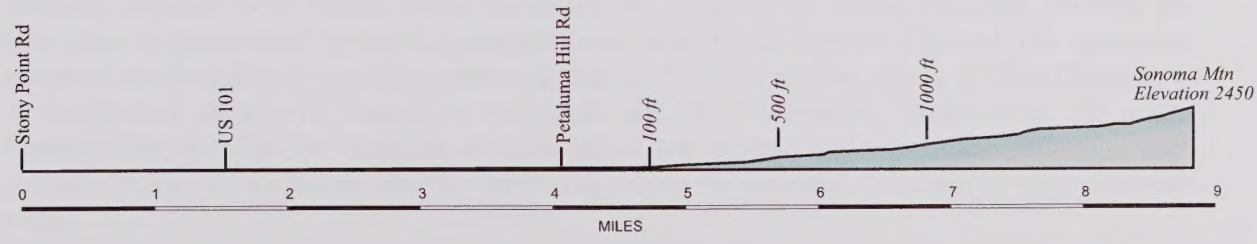


Figure 3.1-1

Section View of Ridgelines

Often the view corridors toward the ridgelines are framed by the natural landscape – such as along the creek beds. Only along East Cotati Avenue, which forms the southern edge of the SSU campus, does a straight line of trees create a more formal view corridor. Other east-west streets that terminate at Petaluma Hill Road—including the Rohnert Park Expressway, Keiser Avenue, Valley House Drive, and streets in Canon Manor—offer panoramic views of the ridgelines.

Open space and rural agricultural lands to the east of the city provide a foreground to the views of Sonoma and Taylor Mountains. Because this General Plan does not contemplate annexation of any area to the east of Petaluma Hill Road, development in the area will continue to be governed by the 1989 Sonoma County General Plan. The Open Space Element of the County General Plan specifies that the Sonoma Mountains provide a scenic backdrop to the Rohnert Park community[1], and indicates that the County seeks to retain a rural, scenic character in this area and avoid its inclusion within any urban sphere of influence.

Scenic Corridors

Because of the pervasive nature of the views of the mountains to the eastside, virtually every street at the city's eastern edge—including Petaluma Hill Road and Bodway Parkway—offers scenic views. Streets at the northwest edge of the city also offer views of the open space beyond, but because the topography in the area is essentially flat, these views are not as dramatic.

The County has designated US 101 and Petaluma Hill Road as scenic corridors. While US 101—in almost its entire stretch through Rohnert Park—is lined with redwoods resulting in limited distant views, Petaluma Hill Road does provide distant views. At the southern end of the Planning Area boundary (near Railroad Avenue), Petaluma Hill Road is lined by open space and farms on both the eastern and western sides. Stands of trees along Canon Manor block some views, and the view corridor is considerably narrowed along SSU, with tall eucalyptus trees along the western edge of the street. The views open up dramatically north of the campus, and from Rohnert Park Expressway northward, the views are again panoramic.

CITY EDGES

Rohnert Park shares much of its western boundary—between Rohnert Park Expressway and Railroad Avenue—with Cotati. While about half the length of the shared boundary between the two cities is demarcated by the Laguna de Santa Rosa Flood Control Channel, the remaining extent of the boundary is visually amorphous. The city's northern edge, along Wilfred Channel, is a straight-line edge, with homes on the south and the Community Separator to the north. Opportunities to alter the character of these edges are limited. Therefore, the discussion here focuses on the city's eastside and the northwest, where the potential for defining edge character exists.

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[1] Sonoma County Open Space Element, p. 227.

East and Southeast

The area north of the SSU has attractive open vistas from streets such as Petaluma Hill Road and Snyder Lane. The scale of these views is dramatic, as the foreground is quite extensive, and trees, along the creeks and the eastern edge of the built city, frame many of the views. Because this area is targeted for development in the General Plan, opportunity to shape the new urban edge along Petaluma Hill Road is present.

South of SSU, Canon Manor has been partially developed as rural residential on half-acre to 2-acre lots. Canon Manor serves as a transition between the more intensive development west of Bodway Parkway and the open space and agricultural uses east of Petaluma Hill Road. Some crop sales stands can be seen along Petaluma Hill Road near the intersection with East Cotati Avenue. Canon Manor is less formally landscaped than the adjacent SSU campus, with the exception of tall stands of eucalyptuses that line East Cotati Avenue.

Northwest

In contrast to the eastside, open space lands in the northwest are cultivated and used for pasture. The Laguna de Santa Rosa Flood Control Channel includes riparian vegetation and defines the southern edge of irrigated cropland. Agricultural fields can be seen from adjacent developed parcels within the City limits. Older, scattered rural residential uses along unimproved roads are found west of the commercial buildings in the Wal-Mart Center along Redwood Drive. These rural residential areas have visible stands of trees.

The Industrial Park abuts the city's western edge. The developed, suburban character of the park, with landscaped setbacks and regularly spaced trees, is in marked contrast to the adjacent rural areas. However, because of the several vacant sites along Business Park Drive, large setbacks, and extensive landscaping, the city's western edge is not as hard as the eastern edge. The western edge of the Rancho Verde mobile home park is separated and screened from adjacent rural areas by tall stands of trees, an open channel, and a solid wall. The regional commercial uses along Redwood Drive are oriented to US 101 and have a hard-edge blank wall along their western edge, adjacent to open space areas.

GOALS: URBAN FORM, VIEWS, AND EDGES

CD-A Create pedestrian-oriented activity centers that serve as community focal points.

CD-B Establish strong connections between adjacent neighborhoods and between neighborhoods and activity centers, in order to encourage walking and biking.

CD-C Establish an open space network that links residential neighborhoods, parks, and open space areas.

CD-D Preserve and enhance views of the eastern ridgeline.

Views of the eastern ridgeline should be preserved from the existing neighborhoods, and should be emphasized in the orientation and design of new public spaces and streets.

CD-E Preserve and enhance the visual character of scenic corridors.

CD-F Maintain a distinct urban edge, while creating a gradual transition between urban uses and open space.

The city currently has a hard edge along most sides, creating a strong distinction between urban and rural uses. While the urban edge should remain distinct, a gradual transition in densities in some areas would create a more harmonious visual impression of the landscape.

POLICIES: URBAN FORM, VIEWS, AND EDGES

Urban Form and Structure

CD-1 As part of preparation of specific plans, ordinances, capital improvements programs, design of public buildings, and other measures, ensure that the University District and the City Center are developed as citywide destinations and with a pedestrian orientation.

Because these centers are part of the General Plan Diagram and because detailed implementation in these areas will be facilitated by area and specific plans, more detailed policies in this element are not essential. However, this policy serves to recognize the role of these two centers in the urban structure sought to be created by this General Plan.

CD-2 Develop linkages between different parts of the city, and foster creation of unique elements that provide identity to the city and the neighborhoods and result in the creation of diverse and distinctive places.

Many of these elements, such as open spaces and streets, are addressed in other policies in the General Plan. However, some salient features and elements are called out here because they are critical to fostering the desired identity. Key urban form elements are diagrammed in Figure 3.1-2. It is expected that, over time, this list will be embellished.

- ***Linear park connecting the eastern neighborhoods with the Sonoma State University campus***: The proposed linear park begins within the Sonoma State Campus and continues north to Keiser Avenue. This parkway would provide strong north-south connections to a bikeway system that now primarily runs east to west along the existing creeks and channels, and would create a public space within the proposed neighborhoods that would serve as an activity center.
- ***Interconnected network of streets.*** New collector connections are shown on the General Plan Diagram at the northern portion of Snyder Lane, along the extension of Eleanor Avenue, and at the eastern section of Rohnert Park Expressway. Also, a minor collector is suggested to provide a north-south connection through the proposed area

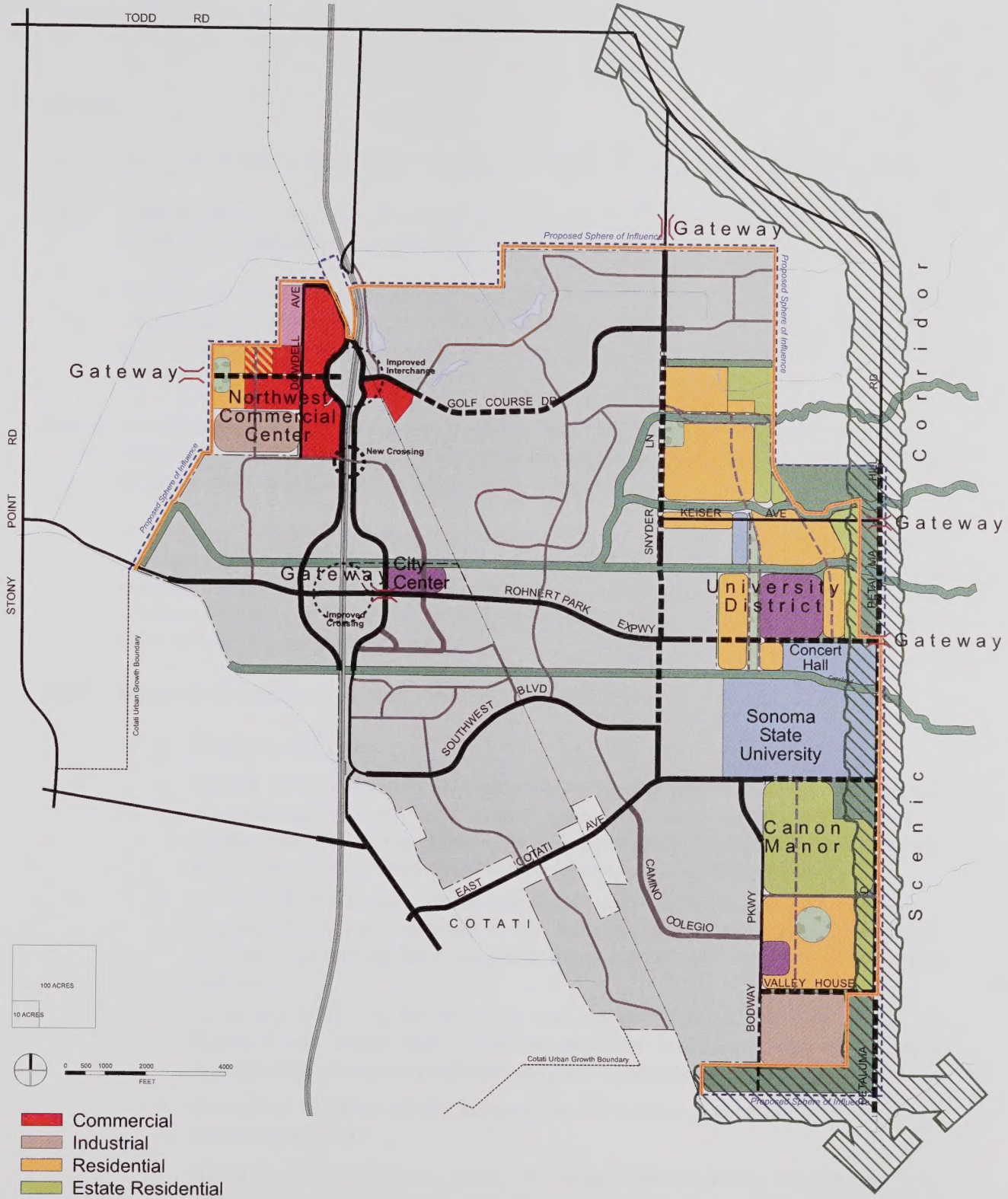
along the linear parkway. The objective of these street connections is to provide the necessary connections for automobiles without compromising pedestrian comfort and quality of the neighborhoods. Where appropriate, existing streets should be extended into new developments to provide for a more extended and continuous street system. More information on standards for streets can be found in Chapter 4: Transportation.

- ***Public Plaza:*** A public plaza shall be provided within the proposed University District. This plaza will serve as a focal point for activity for the area.
- ***Extension of Creekside Greenway:*** The existing paths along creeks and channels provide important connections for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout Rohnert Park and also provide areas for recreation. These bikeways should be extended through the newly developed areas to continue to provide the amenity and strong pedestrian connections. The following guidelines should be used in extending the greenways:
    - Frequent entrances should be provided to increase access to bikeways;
    - A buffer should be provided between adjacent service areas and the bikeway;
    - If a wall is created between the bikeway, and adjacent property, it should be appropriate in size and material; and
    - Wherever possible, development should be oriented towards bikeways in order to activate the space.

CD-3 Designate gateway points at major entrances to the city, and prioritize their design and implementation through the City's Capital Improvements Program. Use landscaping, signs, lighting, and other streetscape design techniques along streets to announce the gateway, and establish development regulations to provide visual emphasis to the gateway.

Potential gateway points include, but are not limited to: Rohnert Park Expressway at Petaluma Hill Road, at Commerce Boulevard, and at Hinebaugh Creek; Snyder Lane on the north side of the "G" section neighborhood; and East Cotati Avenue at Petaluma Hill Road and at the Cotati border.

Street trees, welcome signs, decorative lighting, banners, archways and other streetscape design elements can be used for the gateway. In addition, adjacent development should be required to orient building entrances to the gateway and provide pedestrian amenities, such as sidewalks and walkway lighting, while limiting adjacent parking lots.



Note: Land uses shown are schematic and intended to be consistent with the General Plan Diagram.

Figure 3.1-2

Urban Form and Structure

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Views

CD-4 Designate Petaluma Hill Road as a scenic corridor throughout its stretch along Rohnert Park.

CD-5 Ensure that any landscape treatment along Petaluma Hill Road does not obstruct views of the eastern ridgelines from the street.

Because there are few trees along Petaluma Hill Road north of SSU, the street provides uninterrupted views of the eastern and northern ridgelines. This visual quality of the street should be maintained by discouraging street planting on the eastern edge of the street, except in the general areas of the creeks.

CD-6 As part of any development along Petaluma Hill Road, ensure planting, if any, does not obstruct views of the ridges from the city's eastern neighborhoods. In no case shall trees or shrubs that exceed 25 feet in height upon maturity be used.

A maximum height of 25 feet will permit views of the ridgelines above 1,000-foot elevation from a horizontal distance of about 1,000 feet from the open space edge. If trees are taller, views of the ridgelines from the eastern neighborhoods will be disrupted. Site specific characteristics may necessitate heights shorter than 25 feet or no planting at all to ensure that views are preserved.

CD-7 Minimize disruption of existing views by new development.

- Along Snyder Lane:
- Provide an approximately 32-foot wide linear park/parkway (within the currently acquired right-of-way, which is not needed for street parking; see Chapter 4: Transportation) along the eastern edge of Snyder Lane as a neighborhood amenity and to provide primarily unobstructed views of the ridgeline (see Figure 3.1-4);
- Set back all development on the eastside at least 20 feet from the edge of the linear parkway (that is, approximately 52 feet from the street curb). Establish upper-story step-back requirements for development adjacent to the parkway as part of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Along the 1999 City limits, in the area between Creekside Middle School and Rancho Cotati Senior High School, set back new structures at least 60 feet away from the edge of existing residential-use parcels immediately adjacent to the west.
- Maintain a 100-foot setback between the "G" section and any new development located south of it.
- Along Bodway Parkway, north of Valley House Drive, require any new development on the eastern side of the street, with the exception of the Mixed Use center, to be set back at least 50 feet from the edge of the street right-of-way.

Figure 3.1-3 shows an illustrative simulation of new development along Snyder Lane. See policy CD-49, pertaining to setback requirements for the Mixed Use center.

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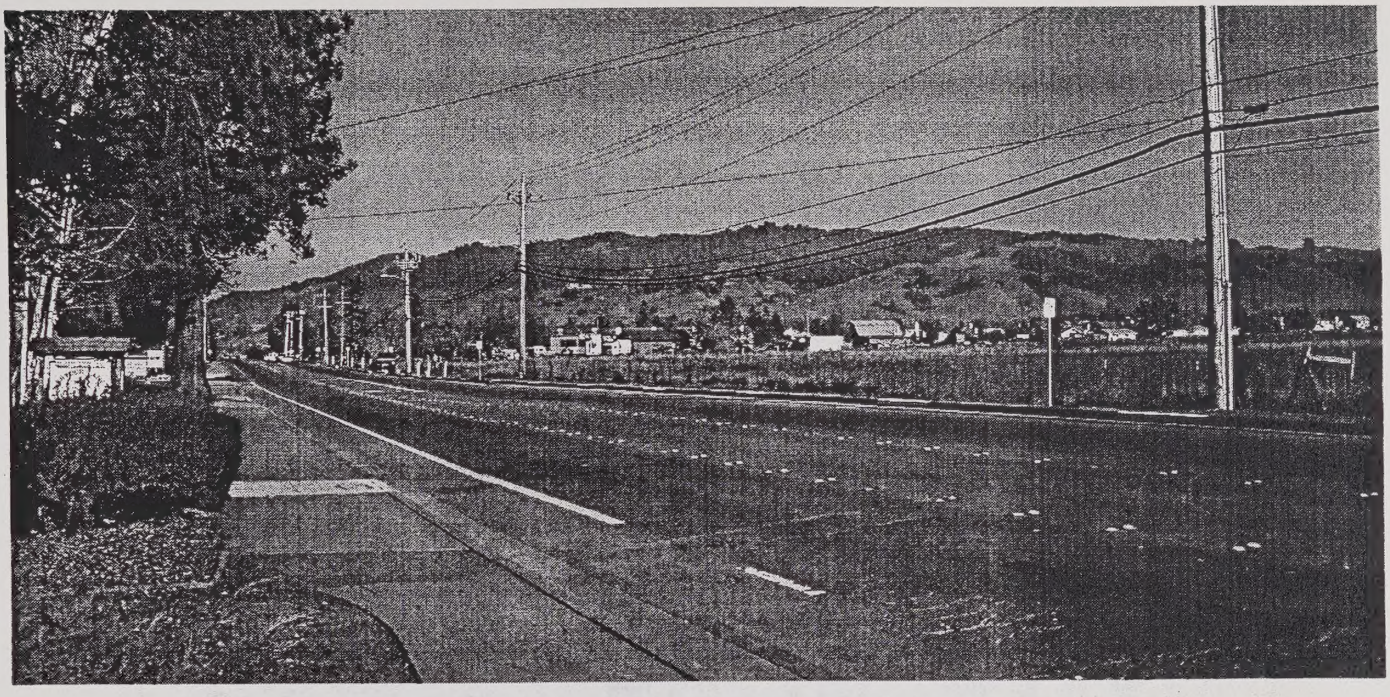
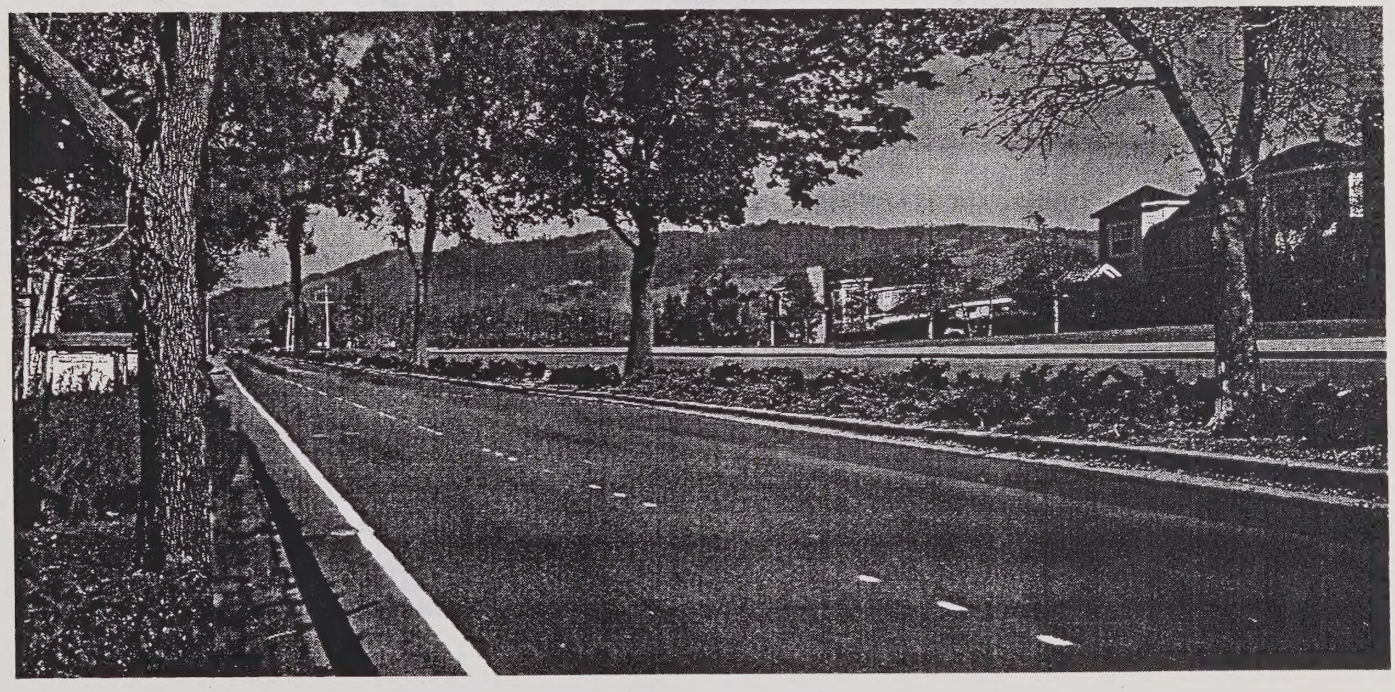




Snyder Lane near Eleanor, looking northeas; illustrative simulation.

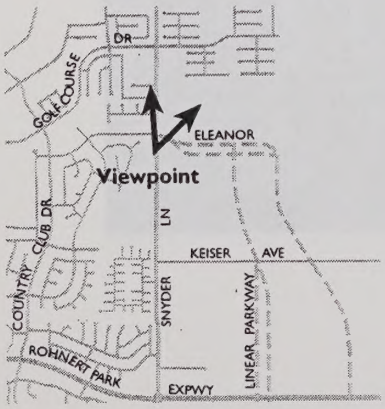
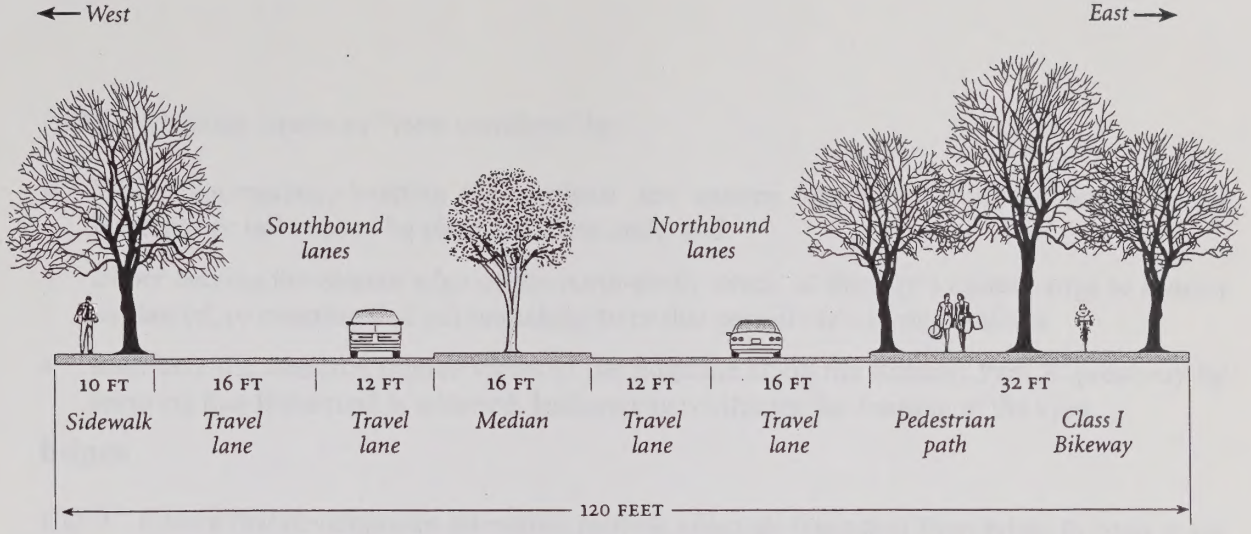
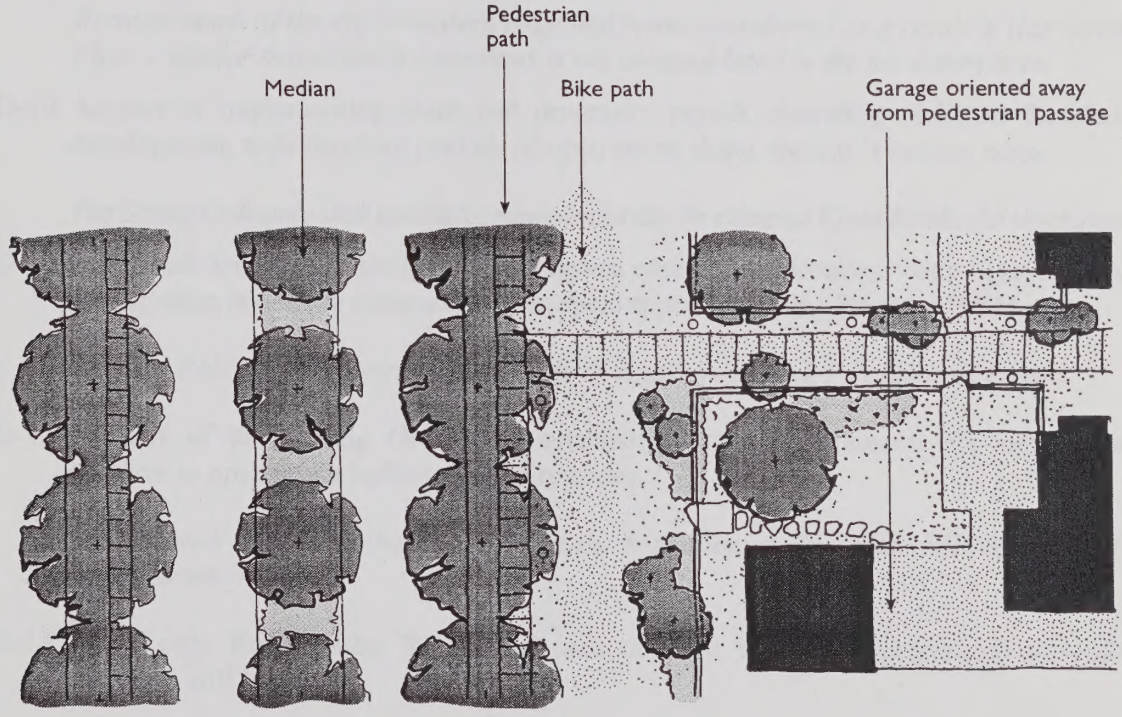
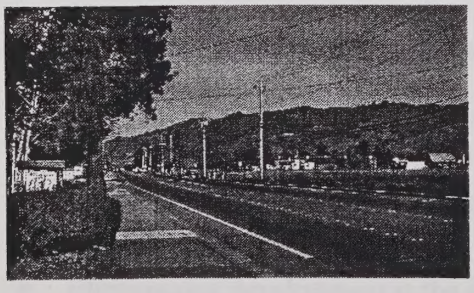


Figure 3.1-3

Snyder Lane near Eleanor, looking northeast; illustrative simulation.







Snyder Lane at Eleanor, looking north.

Figure 3.1-4

Street Section and Plan at Snyder Lane

CD-8 Maintain streets as "view corridors" by:

- Where appropriate, keeping the northern and eastern terminus "open" by not allowing buildings or tall trees to be placed at street ends; and
- Either leaving the eastern edge of the north-south streets at the city's eastern edge to remain unplanted, or ensuring that tall-branching trees that permit views from vehicles.
- Reinforce the dramatic framed views of the ridgeline along the Rohnert Park Expressway by ensuring that if the road is widened, landscaping reinforces the framing of the view.

Edges

CD-9 Ensure that development intensities provide adequate transition from urban to open space uses on the city's eastside, as indicated on the General Plan Diagram.

Because much of the city's western edge will remain unaltered as a result of this General Plan, a similar transition in intensities is not contemplated in the northwest area.

CD-10 As part of implementing plans and programs, permit clustering of Estate Residential development, with resultant pockets of open space along the city's eastern edge.

The Zoning Ordinance shall establish a minimum lot size for clustered Estate Residential development.

CD-11 Require all development along the city's eastern edge to plant trees and other vegetation along the city edge, in order to maintain the open space appearance along Petaluma Hill Road.

See also Policy CD-5 pertaining to height of vegetation along Petaluma Hill Road.

CD-12 As part of the Zoning Ordinance, establish setback requirements for development adjacent to open space buffers along city edges.

This setback should be the final step in the transitioning character between developed and undeveloped land.

CD-13 Allow only Rural Estate Residential uses or open space and recreation uses along Petaluma Hill Road.

While only these uses are shown on the 2000 General Plan Diagram, the intent of the policy is to ensure that this policy is adhered to in case of any future amendments to the General Plan Diagram.

CD-14 Ensure that design treatment at the edge of urban uses results in "soft" edges by:

- Prohibiting the use of solid walls along these edges (i.e., fences must be visually permeable);
- Using materials and design to promote soft edges (such as use of wooden or other rustic materials for fences, etc.); and
- Encouraging development at the edge of the city to face outwards.

3.2 NEIGHBORHOODS AND FOCUS AREAS

While policies related to views and edges have implications that extend beyond individual neighborhoods, this section addresses the design and character at a neighborhood scale. Focused policies for certain areas (including specific plan areas) are also included.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods are Rohnert Park's building blocks. Up until 1999, Rohnert Park's neighborhood structure has been, in many cases, characterized by homes clustered around a school and a park. Neighborhood areas are shown in Figure 3.2-1. Key aspects of Rohnert Park's current (1999) neighborhood structure include:

- *Use Pattern.* While Rohnert Park has a defined neighborhood development pattern, design of neighborhoods to be responsive to the context—such as by creating greenways that traverse neighborhoods, locating parks adjacent to creeks, and locating uses and acitivities in relationship to institutions such as SSU and physical conditions such as urban edges—can help in creating neighborhoods that are responsive to the landscape and lead to greater identity and diversity.
- *Street and Block Patterns.* Neighborhood A, one of the original Rohnert Park neighborhoods, has the greatest number of through streets, blocks, and access points. It is characterized by long internal blocks, connecting local streets, and few cul-de-sacs, complemented by mature trees and landscaped front yards, making it easy and comfortable to bike or walk. Numerous access points provide connections to adjacent areas. In subsequently developed neighborhoods, fewer street connections and intersections, more cul de sacs, and larger blocks make it difficult to reach destinations via walking or biking.
- Canon Manor—a County subdivision originally platted in the 1950s—has rural residential development with rectilinear streets, very large blocks, and large lots, in contrast to Rohnert Park's curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs.
- *Streets.* Rohnert Park has a hierarchical system of streets that separates high-speed through traffic (along arterials and collectors) from low-speed local traffic (along local streets). Chapter 4: Transportation provides a detailed description of the city's street pattern and outlines roadway classifications. Safety, convenience, and comfort for pedestrians and bicycles are an important issue for Rohnert Park residents in 1999.
- Streets in Rohnert Park have a distinctive character. Major arterials such as the Rohnert Park Expressway as well as recent residential arterials such as Snyder Lane have a planted median strip and flanking greenways with pedestrian paths and bikeways. Such streets contribute to the city's image as a place where residential neighborhoods are integrated with parks and where open space surrounds the city. Some streets also have views of the eastern ridgeline. The visual character of new streets is addressed by goals and policies in this section.

Figure 3.2-1

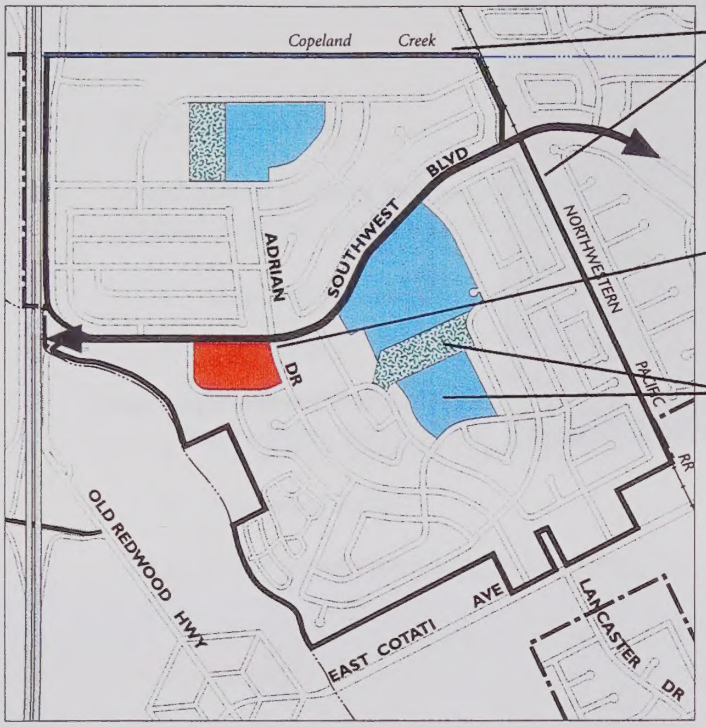
Neighborhood Form

100 acre
Analysis Unit
(2087' x 2087')

0 1000 2000
FEET

	Neighborhood A Pre-1965	Neighborhood E 1970-80	Neighborhood R 1980 +	Neighborhood G 1980+	Canon Manor 1960+
Number of Intersections (T-intersections counted as 0.5)	11	9.5	14	14	5
Number of Through Streets	7	3	3	0	6
Number of Blocks	4	3	3	1	2
Number of Access Points	9	4	5	2	8

Neighborhood Structure



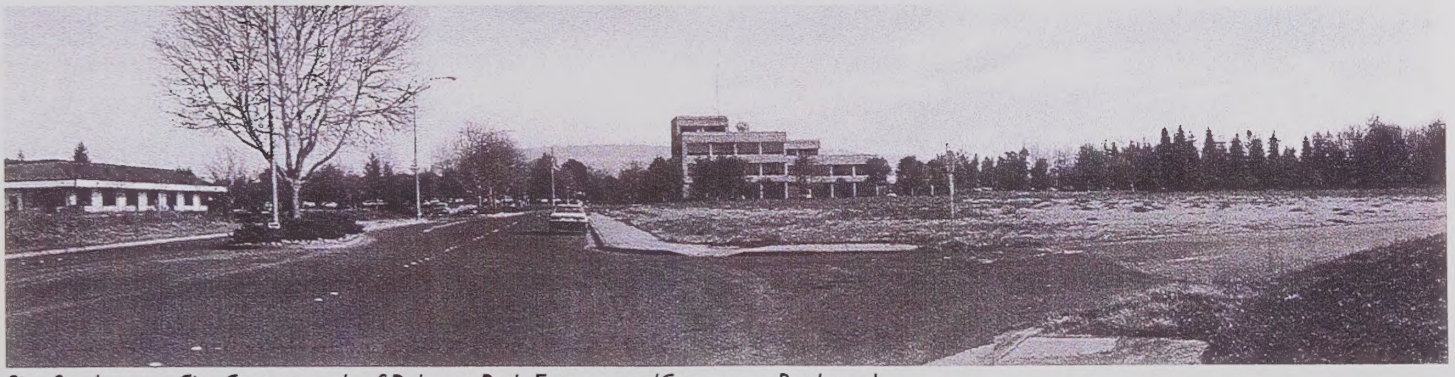
Creeks, flood channels, arterial roads, and railroad tracks form the edges of neighborhoods

Shopping center on arterial street shared by two neighborhoods

Parks and schools at the center of the neighborhood

Major streets form neighborhood edges. Shopping centers along these streets are shared between two or more neighborhoods.

Parks and schools as the focus of neighborhoods.



Site for the new City Center north of Rohnert Park Expressway/Commerce Boulevard.

Figure 3.2-2

Neighborhood Structure

The City's northeastern edge, around the Golis Park neighborhood.

The City's eastern edge, looking south along Petaluma Hill Road. Sonoma State University can be seen in the foreground.

Aerial view of Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course, at right, with the Marguerite Hahn Elementary School and residential neighborhoods.

FOCUS AREAS

In addition to policies that apply across the city, this section of the General Plan includes policies targeted at design issues specific to certain parts of the city. These are:

- University District;
- City Center;
- Northeast Area;
- Northwest Specific Plan Area; and
- Southeast Area.

GOALS: NEIGHBORHOODS AND FOCUS AREAS

CD-G Encourage development of diverse and distinctive neighborhoods that build on the patterns of the natural landscape and are responsive in their location and context.

This General Plan encourages development of neighborhoods to be responsive to their location and context, rather than being based on a uniform design formula.

CD-H Promote a mix of uses and a variety of housing types and sizes within residential neighborhoods.

The General Plan Diagram establishes a mix of uses within areas of new development and promotes a mix of housing types by allowing a range of residential densities within the same areas. This goal and the subsequent policies build on the overall direction established in the diagram.

CD-I Ensure that neighborhood streets provide an attractive physical environment for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

CD-J Maintain the character of existing neighborhoods while undertaking streetscape and signage improvements in selected areas.

POLICIES: NEIGHBORHOODS AND FOCUS AREAS

Neighborhood Structure

CD-15 Establish thresholds and procedures for review of design of new neighborhoods.

CD-16 Require neighborhood design—including components such as land use, development intensity, and street layouts—to be responsive to natural and institutional elements, including:

- *Creeks.* Ensure adequate access by locating streets and paths adjacent to creekways, and integrate parks and open space with creekways;
- *Urban edges.* Ensure transition from urban intensities to open space; and
- *Integration with the surroundings.* Promote connections with adjacent neighborhoods by integrating street networks, and responding to existing landscape and visual treatments.

CD-17 Allow townhomes and multifamily dwellings to be integrated with single-family residences.

These buildings should be in character with the surrounding homes in massing, scale, and orientation. See Figure 3.2-3 for illustrations of housing types.

CD-18 Prepare a design standards checklist for design reviews.

This checklist would provide a simple means for evaluating proposals.

Street/Building Relationship

CD-19 As part of updating the City's zoning regulations or applicable specific plans, adopt standards to foster pedestrian orientation of new development in Mixed-Use and Neighborhood Commercial areas by:

- Developing a coherent set of standards for buildings, such that building facades and entrances *define* the streetscape and promote street activity;
- Maintaining volumetric building standards that require buildings to be located at the street by *establishing* maximum setback or "build-to lines", with appropriate step-backs for upper stories;
- Ensuring that primary entrances of buildings face the street;
- Requiring that parking is provided in the interior of the block, screened by the building or landscaping;
- Requiring awnings and canopies for pedestrian comfort, where appropriate; and
- Establishing building transparency from sidewalks.

CD-20 Encourage buildings to foster a sense of place by providing transitions between the street and building, front setback variation for residential development, and building articulation and massing, as part of development standards or any design guidelines that may be prepared.

Elements such as porches, bay windows, and landscaping should be designed to create a transition between public and private spaces. When porches are used, they should be designed as a usable outdoor space.

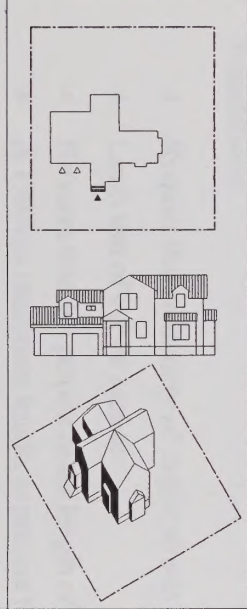
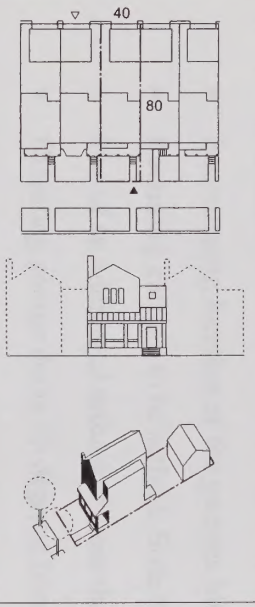
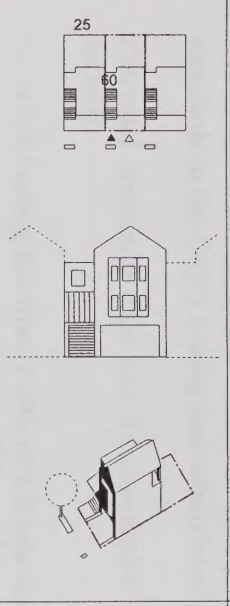
Housing Type	Estate (front loaded)	Low Density Detached	Low Density (rear loaded)	Semi-Detached (rear loaded)	Townhouse (rear loaded)	Townhouse (front loaded)	Residential Over Parking And Commercial Podium
							
Illustrative Lot Size	20,000	6,000	6,000	3,200	3,200	2,000	-
Dwelling Size	5,260	2,800	2,800	1,400	1,400	1,200	1,200
Number of Floors	2-2.5	1-2	1-2	2	2	2.5	2-3 over podium
Density (units/gross acre)	2.0	6	6	12	12	20	30
Typical Density Range for Housing Type	0.5-2.0	5-7.5	5-7.5	12-16	12-16	15-30	20-30
General Plan Land Use Classification	Estate Residential	Low/Medium Density Residential	Low/Medium Density Residential	High Density Residential	High Density Residential	High Density Residential	Mixed Use

Figure 3.2-3

Illustrative Housing Types

CD-21 Minimize the visual dominance of garages by maintaining appropriate development standards in the City's zoning and subdivision regulations and/or design guidelines.

Potential strategies that can be considered as part of the City's Zoning Ordinance include:

- Limiting the front width of a house that can be occupied with a garage to be no more that one-half the building width;
- Encouraging location of the garages towards the back of properties;
- Requiring garages to be setback from the front edge of house;
- Use of an additional setback if more than a two-car garage entrance is needed;
- Orienting garage doors 90 degrees from the street;
- Allowing implementation of an alley system in new development, with garages accessed from the rear; and
- Incorporating design elements on the second level above the garages such as bay windows or balconies that break down the scale of the garage.

CD-22 Provide streets at the edges of each phase of development in order to provide flexibility and better continuity for later phases.

CD-23 Establish design guidelines for Estate Residential uses to ensure new buildings are consistent with surrounding areas.

The City's design guidelines shall establish provisions for Estate Residential to ensure that building mass will be compatible with surrounding transitional land uses to soften City edges and protect viewsheds.

Streets and Street Network

CD-24 Ensure that the Subdivision Regulations encourage a fine-grained and integrated pattern of streets that provide continuity between neighborhoods, have a human scale, and enhance the character of neighborhoods and activity centers. Ensure that the Subdivision Regulations:

- Require the *continuity* of major streets between neighborhoods.
- Limit use of cul de sacs to:
- No more than ten percent of the length of all streets in a subdivision map; and
- A 150-foot maximum length, to prevent their use as a substitute to through streets.

- Where cul de sacs are used, integrate pedestrian and bicycle connections through the end to the *adjacent* area.
- Promote closer spacing between the intersections of local streets, as defined in Chapter 4: Transportation, *with* a maximum spacing of 1/8th mile (660 feet) that will strengthen pedestrian connections.

  See Figures 3.2-4 and 3.2-5 for illustrative diagrams.

CD-25 Use traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speeds in residential areas rather than limiting the street connections.

Connecting streets provide direct linkages between different areas of the city. Traffic calming measures are also discussed in Chapter 4: Transportation.

CD-26 Design local streets to not only accommodate traffic, but also to serve as comfortable pedestrian environments. These should include, but not be limited to:

- Street tree planting adjacent to curb and between the street and sidewalk to provide a buffer between the *pedestrian* and the automobile, where appropriate;
- *See Figure 3.2-5 for an illustrative diagram.*
- Minimum curb cuts along streets; and
- Sidewalks on both *sides* of streets, where feasible.

CD-27 Allow sound walls only for development along US 101 and the NP Railroad, as shown in Figure 3.2-6.

A review of the calculated noise levels and traffic counts along Rohnert Park's arterials, coupled with implementation of other tools such as larger setbacks, suggests that sound walls will not be necessary along proposed arterials. Restrictions on use of sound walls will allow neighborhoods to be less inward focused and allow them to be perceived as more open and welcoming to passers by. See Figure 3.2-6.

CD-28 Ensure that development standards do not result in disincentives for providing closely spaced local streets.

The City should, during updates to the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations, establish minimum lot sizes that take into consideration local streets every 400-500 feet and still allow maximum densities/intensities for the various land use categories to be attained.

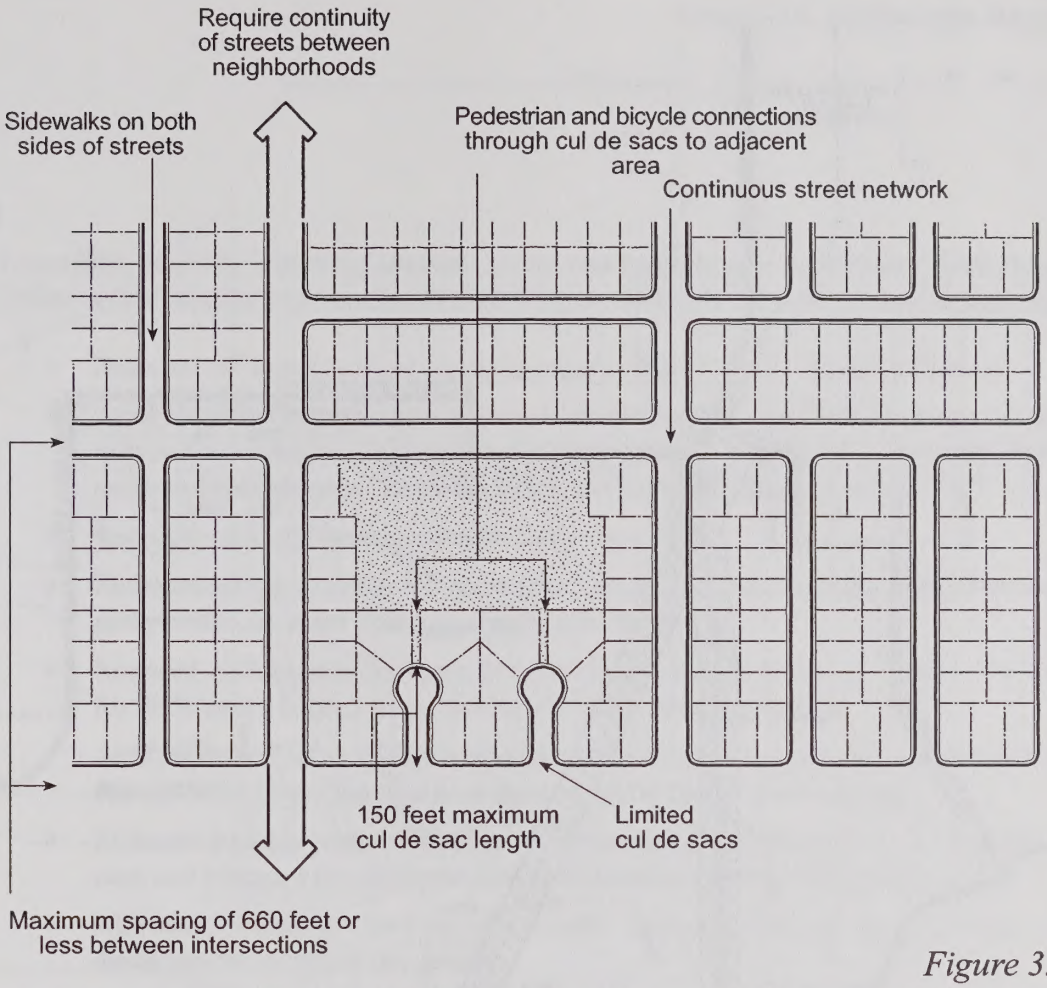
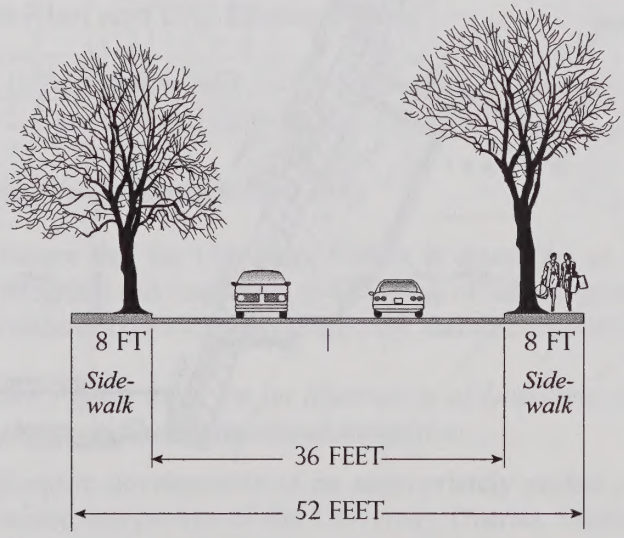


Figure 3.2-4

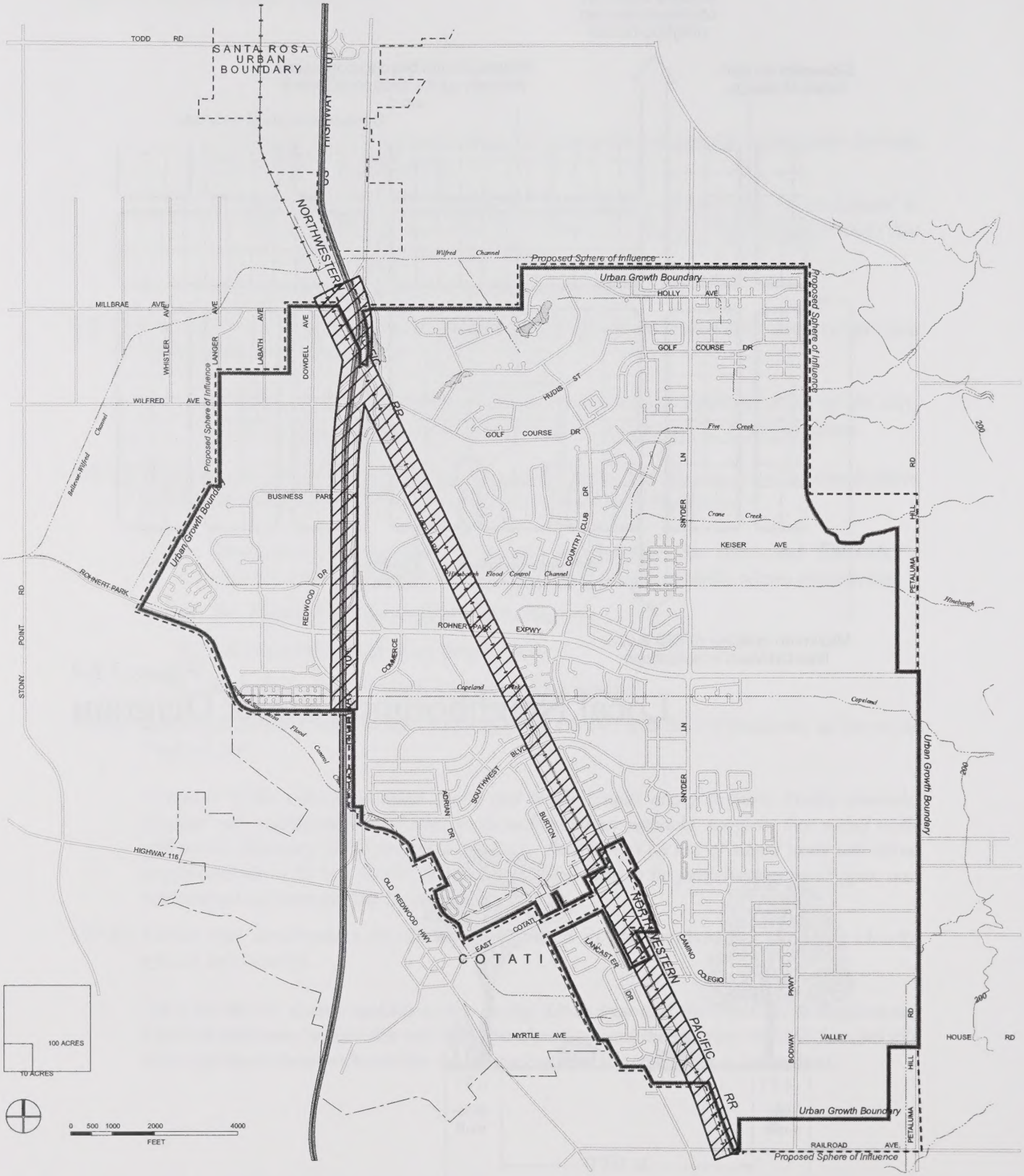
Local Neighborhood Street Diagram



Local Street

Figure 3.2-5

Local Neighborhood Street Section



Soundwalls allowed

Figure 3.2-6

Allowable Sound Wall Locations

Parking

CD-29 To establish flexibility in parking standards, review residential parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance, and consider implementing the following provisions and exceptions, where appropriate:

- Reduced off-street parking requirements for High Density Residential uses;
- As of 2000, the Zoning Ordinance requires multi-family housing with 10 or more housing units and condominiums, to have two enclosed parking spaces per unit plus one additional uncovered parking space "for each bedroom in excess of three bedrooms per unit."
- Reduced parking requirements for senior housing;
- Reduced off-street parking requirements for residential sites adjacent to the linear park, where on-street parking is more available;
- Reduced parking requirements for development with a mix of uses, to account for differences in peak hour parking demand between the uses.

  As of 2000, the Zoning Ordinance requires sites with more than one use to provide parking that equals the sum of the number of spaces required for each individual use.
- Reduced parking requirements in areas designated as Mixed Use, where mix of uses and compact development favors pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Allowing on-street parking to count toward parking requirements for development in mixed use areas.

CD-30 Encourage development of parking assessment districts for the mixed-use areas. Upon establishment and participation in such a district, do not require parking on individual sites.

This policy allows flexibility in the arrangement of parking within mixed-use areas. On-street or off-street parking can be located off-site, allowing more compact development.

Specific Plan and City Center Areas

Policies in this section refer to the individual specific plan areas and City Center, as defined in Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management.

University District Specific Plan Area

CD-31 Ensure that the University District is developed as an active, mixed-use pedestrian center, integrated and responsive to the design of the University Concert Hall, sensitive to the existing residential developments to the west, and with transitions to open space to the east.

See Figure 3.2-7 for an illustration of University District urban structure. Figure 3.2-8 shows an illustrative visual simulation.

CD-32 Require development of an appropriately scaled public plaza as the focal point of the mixed use portion of the University District. Ensure that the design of the plaza reflects the following considerations:

- Permit maximum accessibility and foster a public orientation;
- Protection and emphasis of primary view corridors to the east and the north;
- Definition of edges by adjacent buildings and proper landscaping;
- Adequate lighting for nighttime use;
- Flexibility of space for various programs such as concerts, flea markets, etc;
- Locating active uses such as restaurants and cafes around the plaza; and
- A location that is accessible for pedestrians from adjacent areas.

The location of the plaza is critical for its success. Ideally the plaza would be centrally located, and accessible to a large majority of the mixed-use area within a ¼-mile radius or a five minutes walk. The plaza should also be visible and accessible and accessible from Rohnert Park Expressway, although it need not be located adjacent to it.

Many plazas in the West provide successful examples of such considerations; most are based on precepts of Spanish neighborhood design. The Plaza in Santa Fe, the oldest in the country, is perhaps the most successful example. The plaza in Sonoma is much larger, with wider streets as well.

CD-33 Ensure that the Circulation Plan for the University District Specific Plan incorporates:

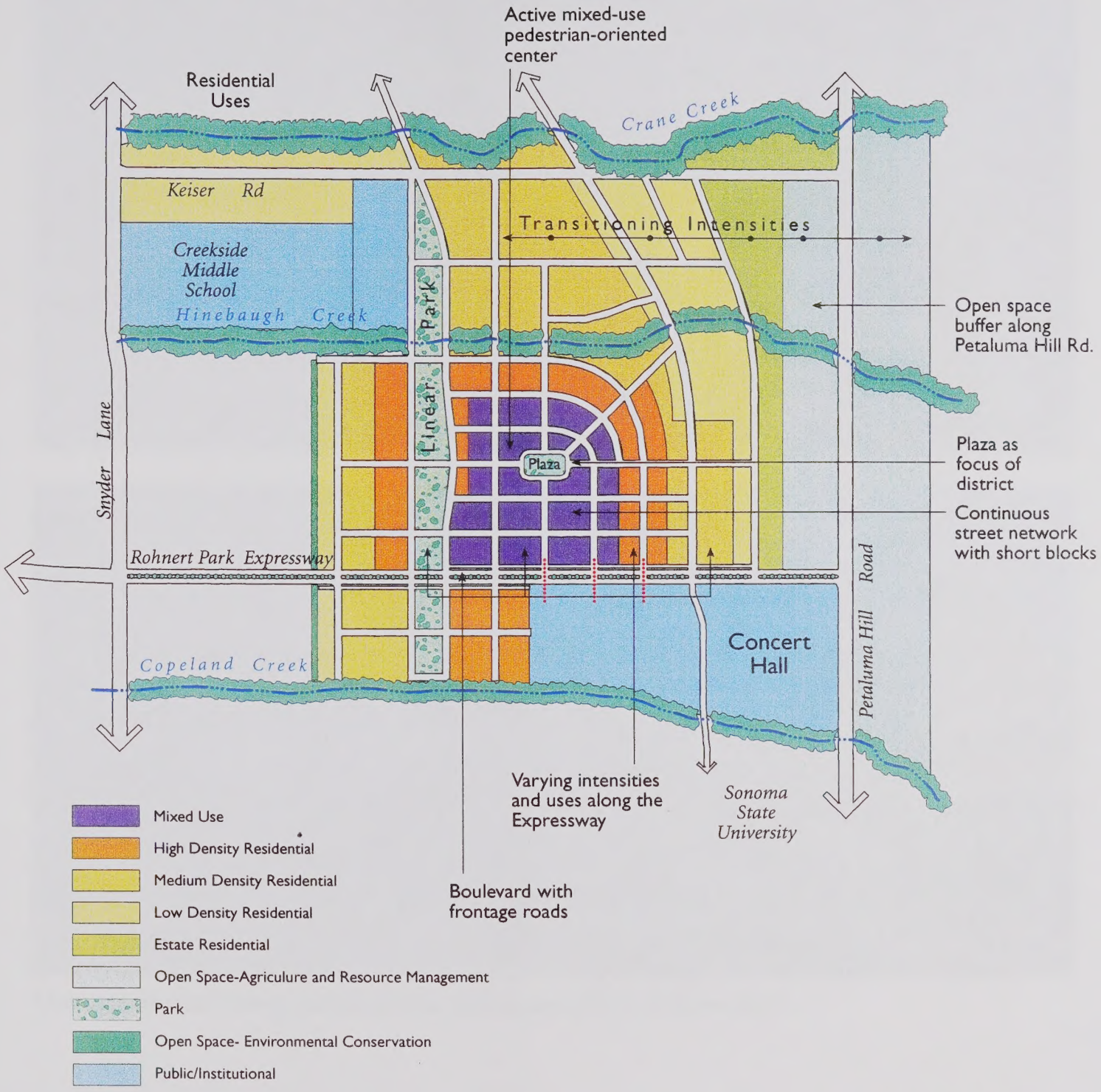
- A modified grid-pattern of pedestrian-scaled interconnected streets, no more than 400 to 500 feet apart in the mixed-use areas;

  Where this grid pattern intersects with Rohnert Park Expressway and through-automobile traffic may not be feasible, through pedestrian and bikeway connections across the Expressway should still be provided.

- A maximum block area;

  A maximum block size would help prevent large blocks that impede circulation within and between neighborhoods. An appropriate maximum block size, to be established as part of the specific plan, would be in the range of 2.5 to 4.0 acres.

- Street system integrated with existing and proposed accesses to SSU and the Concert Hall;
- South side of the greenway along Hinebaugh Creek fronted by a street (as opposed to residential or other built uses), to facilitate connections to the future growth area north of the creek;
- Bikeways, with Class I bikeways along the linear park leading to the campus and along Hinebaugh Creek, with connections to the citywide network;
- Traffic calming measures and unified streetscape; and
- Boulevard-like design for Rohnert Park Expressway between Snyder Lane and Petaluma Hill Road (see Figure 3.2-9).



Note: Streets are shown for illustrative purposes only.

Figure 3.2-7

University District Urban Structure

University district looking northeast from central plaza; illustrative simulation.

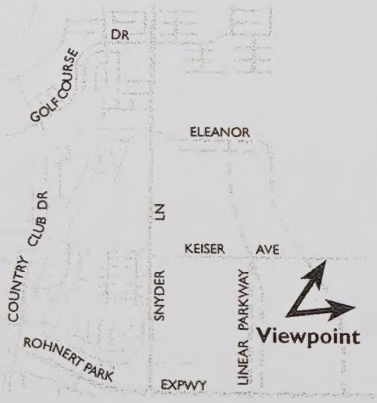


Figure 3.2-8

University district looking northeast from central plaza; illustrative simulation.

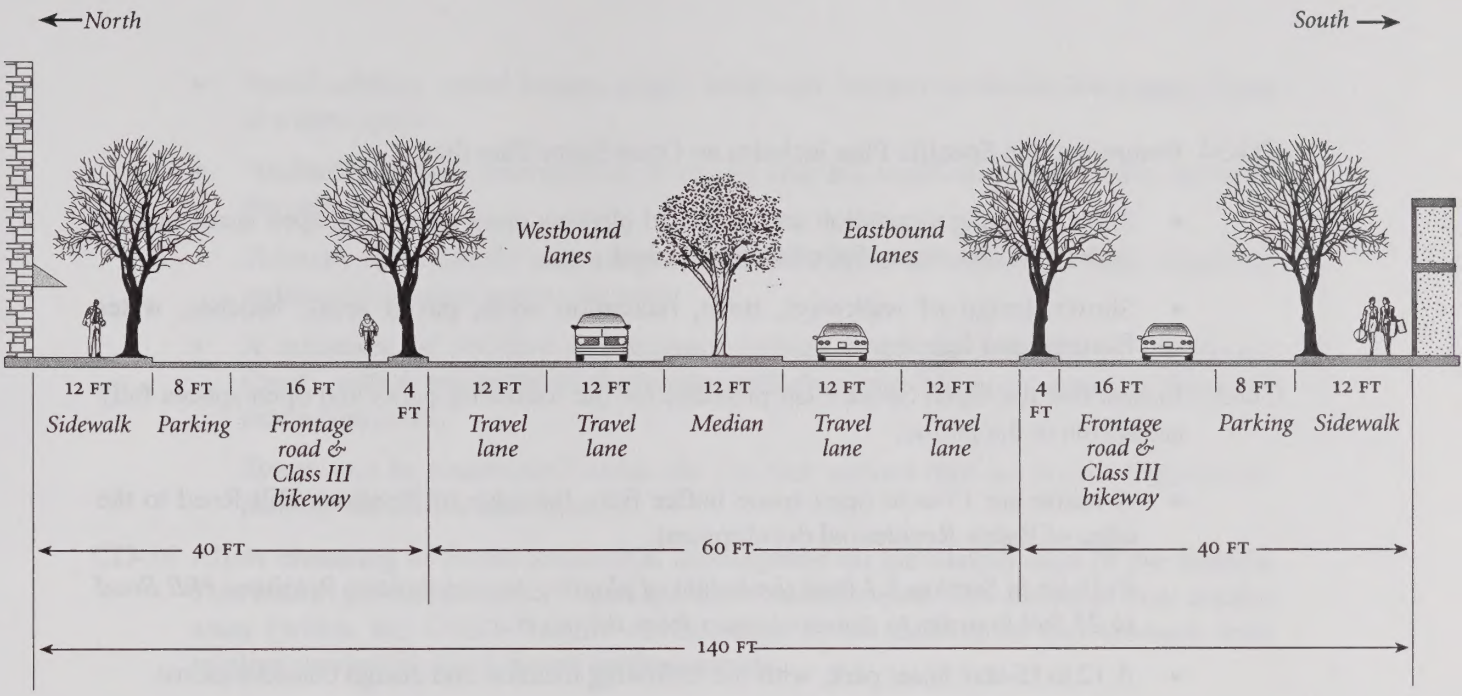


Figure 3.2-9

Section of Rohnert Park Expressway at Sonoma State University Concert Hall

CD-34 Ensure that the Specific Plan includes an Open Space Plan that:

- Shows existing vegetation and proposed planting areas (including open space buffer) with types and sizes of plant materials; and
- Shows design of walkways, trails, recreation areas, paved areas, benches, water features, and lighting.

CD-35 Ensure that the Open Space Plan provides for the following parks and open spaces fully accessible to the public:

- A minimum 17-acre open space buffer from the edge of Petaluma Hill Road to the edge of Estate Residential development.

  Policies in Section 3.1 limit the height of planting material along Petaluma Hill Road to 25 feet in order to preserve views from the interior.

- A 12 to 15-acre linear park, with the following location and design considerations:
- The linear park should be located at the eastern edge of Creekside Middle School property;
- The objective is to ensure that the park can provide direct connections between SSU and Crane Creek.
- The park should be parallel to Snyder Lane in order to provide the most direct route between the eastern neighborhoods and SSU;
- The western edge of the park should be straight, in the north-south orientation, with straight bicycle and pedestrian paths to facilitate direct connection to SSU. The eastern edge of the park need could be curved;
- A minimum 150-foot width from curb-to-curb (with no maximums established as part of this General Plan);

  The linear park will serve as a recreation center for the adjacent neighborhoods. The park should be designed to comfortably accommodate a Class I bikeway and leave enough room for recreational activity, such as informal play areas and basketball or volleyball courts. See Figure 3.2-10 for an illustrative plan of the linear park, Figure 3.2-11 for a section through the park, and Figure 3.2-12 for an illustrative simulation of development at the park's eastern edge.

- Provision of a Class I bikeway that provides a direct connection from SSU to Crane Creek; and
- Landscaping at park edges to define the space and to serve as a buffer from automobile traffic.
- A minimum of 300 feet and maximum of 500 feet between intersecting streets.

  The objective of these distances is to provide minimal interruptions topedestrians without creating a barrier between the two adjacent areas.

- Speed calming, speed bumps, and/or landscape features to ensure that traggic flows at a slow speed;
- "Bulbed" sidewalk intersections to ensure safe and comfortable pedestrian access to the park.

  Sidewalk bulbs are the widened part of a sidewalk at an intersection that effectively reduce the distance across the street.
- A minimum of 100-foot development setback from the centerline of Hinebaugh Creek, with a minimum 30-foot wide publicly accessible open space on the south side of the creek.

  Streets can be constructed within the 100-foot setback (but not within 30-foot wide publicly accessible open space).

CD-36 Allow clustering of Estate Residential development on the eastern edge of the Specific Plan area to provide pockets of open space and uninterrupted view corridors from interior areas (within the UGB). Require development to be sensitive to and set-back from existing residential development on the westside.

Section 3.1 includes a policy to ensure that the City's Zoning and Subdivision regulations permit clustering for Estate Residential developments.

CD-37 Ensure that the Specific Plan and/or the City Zoning Ordinance reinforce the area's pedestrian-oriented character. Development standards should include:

- "Build-to" lines;
- Defined active street-edges;
- Required transparency;
- Maximum distance between entrances in the mixed-use areas;
- Allowing use of sidewalks for outdoor seating; and
- Integration of street furniture, signage, and elements such as awnings that increase the pedestrian comfort.

CD-38 Require each of the one-way couplets along the linear park to provide parking on both sides (east and west) of the streets. Allow half of this parking located immediately adjacent to the Medium- and High-Density Residential areas to count towards off-street parking for these uses.

This change in parking regulations would result in increased surveillance and security on the street and the park as well.

CD-39 Explore the feasibility of use of parking at Sonoma State University's Concert Hall for the University District. Allow suitable reductions in parking requirements for developments in the district if shared parking is available.

Shared use, if implemented, would not be permitted when concert events are taking place.

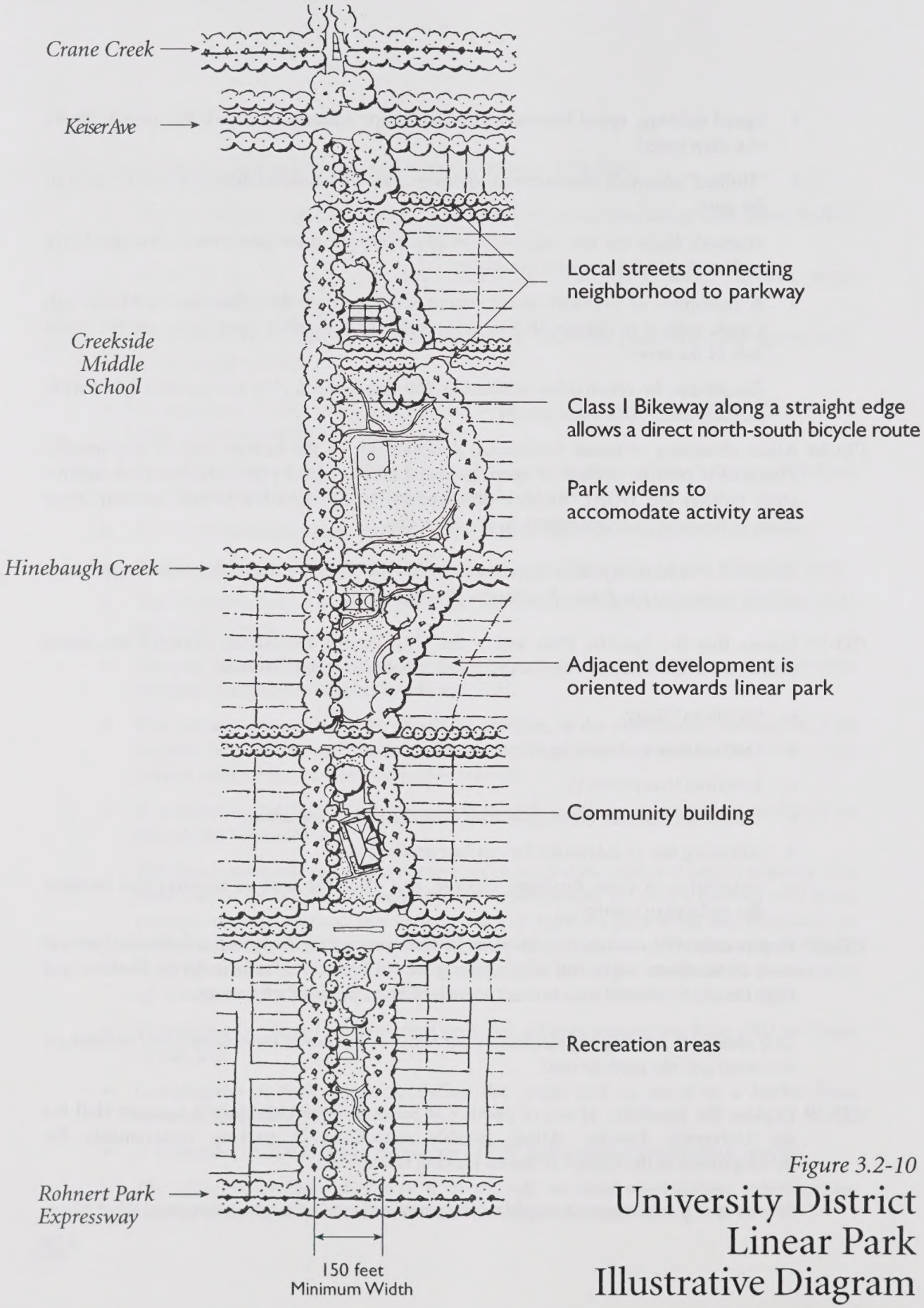


Figure 3.2-10

University District Linear Park Illustrative Diagram

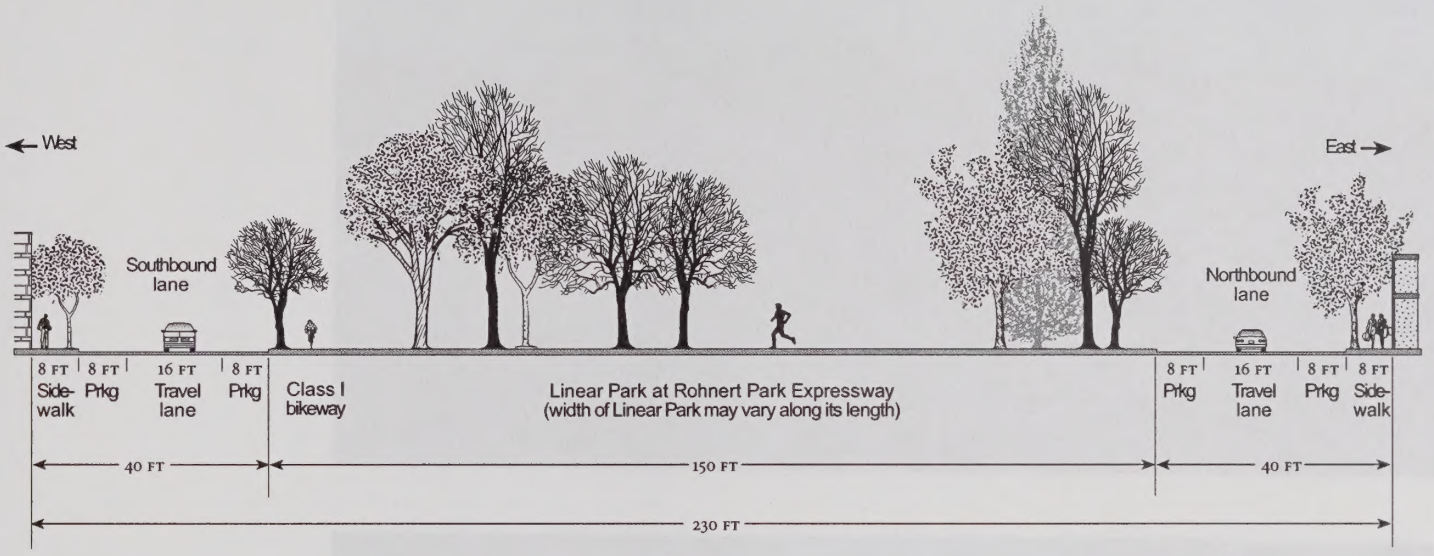


Figure 3.2-11

Section of Linear Park at Rohnert Park Expressway

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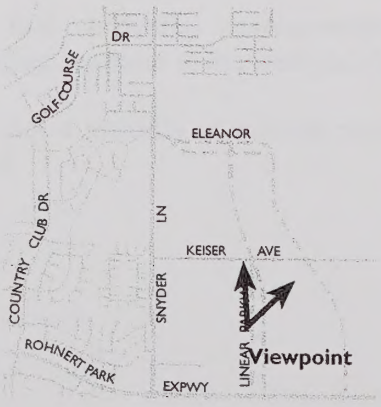


Figure 3.2-12
University District, along linear park; illustrative simulation.

City Center

CD-40 Use an adopted City Center Concept Plan (Policy LU-30) as the basis for the development character of the area.

The City Center Concept Plan, in draft stages as of early 2000, envisions the center as "an attractive, family-friendly district, serving as the central community-gathering place, a focal point for cultural, recreational, business, and civic functions." The City Center should be a "pedestrian-oriented environment with City Hall Drive serving as the City's 'main street'".

Northeast Specific Plan Area

Figure 3.2-13 shows an illustrative simulation of development along Valley House Drive.

CD-41 Provide a minimum of one local north-south through street, extending from Eleanor Avenue to Keiser Avenue, within the area between Snyder Lane and the collector leading to the University District linear park.

CD-42 Provide an 8-acre park to serve as a neighborhood focal point.

This park should be directly adjacent to either Snyder Lane or the Five Creek greenway and should be directly accessible by bicycle and pedestrian paths to the greenway.

CD-43 Locate the proposed High Density Residential uses adjacent to open space (the Five Creek Greenway or 8-acre park) and along the proposed north-south arterial and collector streets to increase accessibility.

Northwest Specific Plan Area

CD-44 Use design review to ensure the compatibility of uses in areas where residential and commercial areas are adjacent.

CD-45 Foster strong design character for Wilfred Avenue through uniform streetscape and signage, and by requiring some parts of all development, including commercial, to be built to the edge of the properties along the street to provide street definition.

CD-46 Provide a park adjacent to Langer Avenue as transition between developed and undeveloped areas and to serve the adjacent residential uses.

CD-47 Ensure that residential developments are designed to capitalize on views of the surrounding separator to the west and the north and beyond.

CD-48 Ensure that a majority of internal parking is located away from Wilfred Avenue or is screened.

Southeast Specific Plan Area

CD-49 Locate the proposed Mixed Use Commercial area along Bodway Parkway to increase accessibility. Require buildings to front on Bodway with parking located behind buildings.

CD-50 Provide Medium Density Residential uses adjacent to mixed-use/commercial areas. Require the commercial center to provide landscaping to screen parking and provide a buffer between the residential and commercial uses.

CD-51 Ensure that the proposed neighborhood park is located adjacent to the Medium Density Residential area.

CD-52 Allow only Estate Residential uses along Petaluma Hill Road in order to provide transition between developed and undeveloped areas.

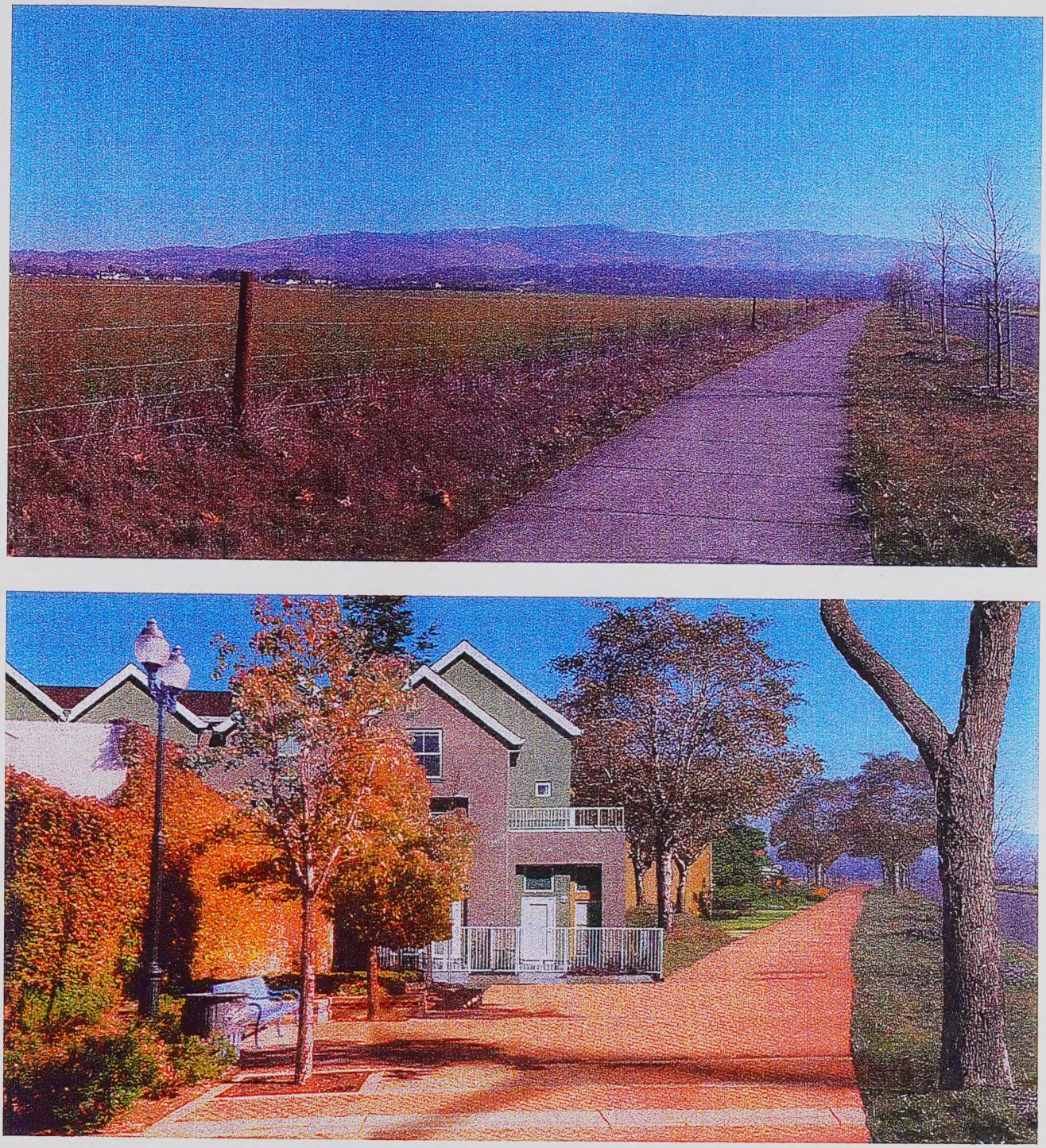
While this is the only use along Petaluma Hill Road shown on the General Plan Diagram, the intent is to ensure that this policy is maintained if the General Plan Diagram were to be amended in the future.

Existing Neighborhoods

CD-53 Ensure that new development in existing neighborhoods is respectful of the character of existing uses and causes minimal design intrusion.

The General Plan does not seek to alter the character of existing neighborhoods, which have played and will continue to play an important role in the future success of Rohnert Park as a community.

CD-54 In cooperation with merchants, undertake a streetscape program for Commerce Boulevard that provides high branching trees that permit the stores to be seen but provide a canopy to the street. Provide shrubs to screen parking from the streets.



Valley House Drive looking east illustrative simulation.

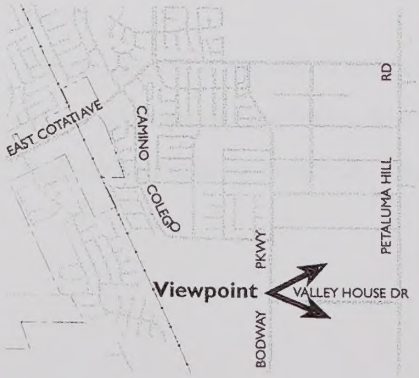


Figure 3.2-13

Valley House Drive looking east; illustrative simulation.

3.3 COMMERCIAL CENTERS

As of 1999, essentially two types of commercial centers exist in Rohnert Park:

- *Neighborhood Commercial*, located adjacent to neighborhoods, providing convenient shopping for nearby the residents. Neighborhood commercial centers are primarily oriented toward the automobile, but include amenities like large sidewalks and landscaped buffers that are pedestrian-friendly. The largest of these, at Rohnert Park Expressway/Commerce Boulevard, includes more than half the land devoted to neighborhood commercial facilities in the city.
- *Regional Commercial*, located primarily along US 101, serving a regional clientele, in addition to Rohnert Park residents. Large, big-box retail stores (such as Home Depot and Wal-Mart) along Redwood Drive are oriented to their parking lots and the visibility that US 101 provides. Large blocks, minimal access points, and lack of shade trees discourage walking and bicycling.

While much new future commercial development is contemplated as being part of mixed-use centers (policies for which are included in the preceding section), single-use commercial development may occur in several areas.

GOALS: COMMERCIAL CENTERS

CD-K Provide safe, convenient, and comfortable pedestrian connections within commercial centers and between commercial centers and adjacent sites and residential neighborhoods.

CD-L Ensure that the location of buildings and the orientation of entrances within commercial centers allow for easy pedestrian access.

POLICIES: COMMERCIAL CENTERS

Figure 3.3-1 illustrates the potential visual appearance of commercial centers developed according to the policies in this section.

CD-55 Require all development within commercial districts to provide pedestrian amenities, including:

- Pedestrian walkways through parking lots to connect buildings on opposite sides of parking areas;
- Sidewalks wide enough to accommodate pedestrian use;
- Sidewalk intersection bulbs, to reduce the walking distance across streets;
- Pedestrian lighting, benches, street trees, and other sidewalk amenities; and

- Landscaping that complements pedestrian circulation and eliminates barriers to pedestrian access.

  Commercial development should be designed to accommodate both the pedestrian and the automobile. Neighborhood commercial centers, in particular, should provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Regional commercial centers are primarily accessed by car, but pedestrian amenities on-site (adequate sidewalk widths, pedestrian lighting, landscaping that complements pedestrian activity and removes barriers to walking, etc.) can help improve pedestrian safety and circulation and facilitate walking to and from adjacent sites.

  See also Chapter 4: Transportation, which requires pedestrian amenities to be provided within 600 feet of Mixed-use, High Density Residential, schools, parks, and recreational uses.

CD-56 As part of the Zoning Ordinance, maintain development standards for all development within commercial districts that include, but are not limited to:

- Maximum setbacks from the front lot-line;
- Maximum length of the front lot line that can be used as the edge of a parking lot;
- Landscaping requirements;
- Design standards for parking lots, including landscaping and buffering;
- Required orientation of main entrances to the street;
- Building transparency and pedestrian comfort;
- Signage requirements; and
- Height, overall size, materials, lighting, and location.

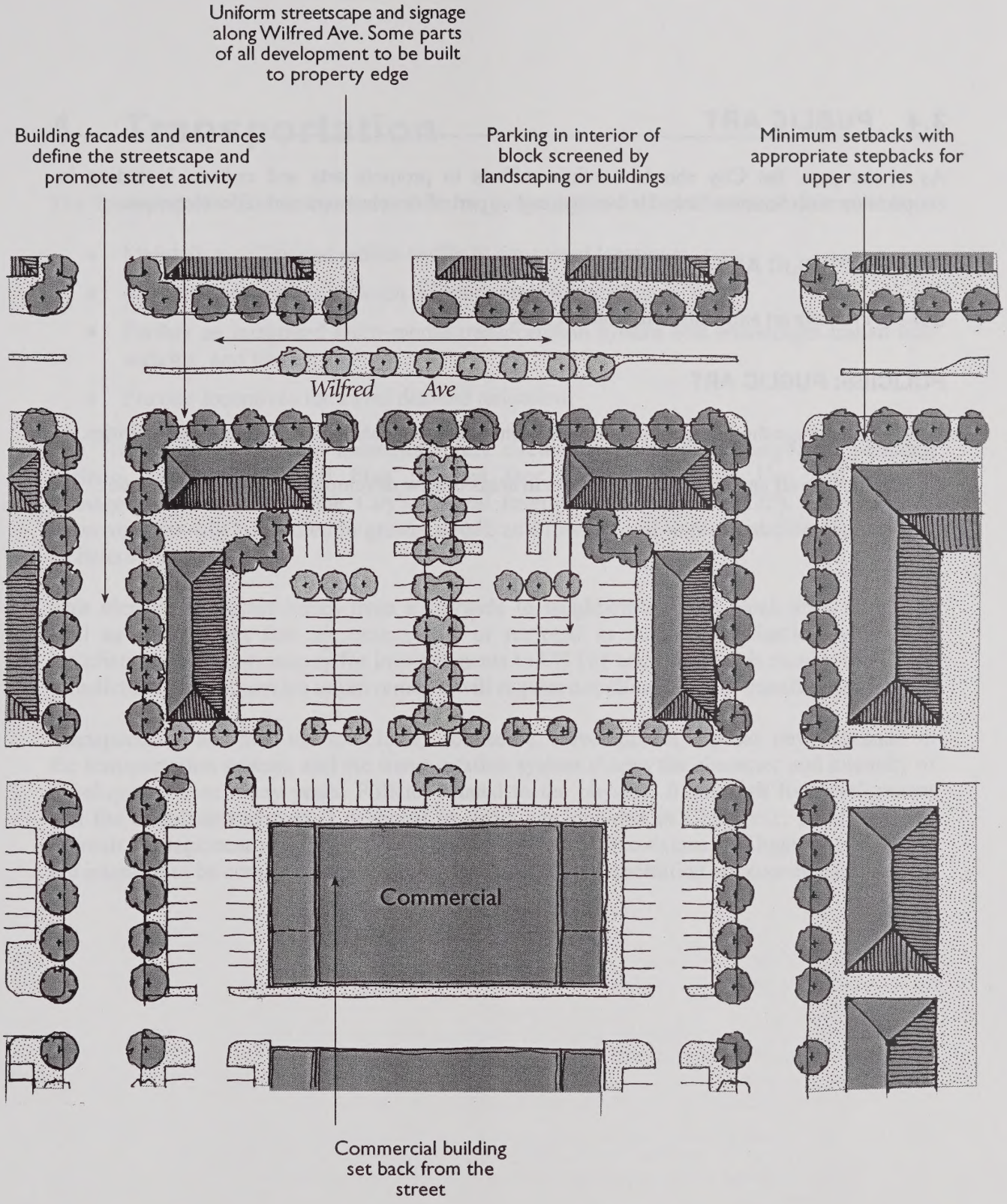


Figure 3.3-1

Northwest Specific Plan Area Illustrative Diagram

3.4 PUBLIC ART

As in the past, the City should continue efforts to promote arts and culture, including in cooperation with Sonoma State University, and as part of development and redevelopment.

GOALS: PUBLIC ART

CD-M Promote art and culture in Rohnert Park

POLICIES: PUBLIC ART

CD-57 Encourage the integration of art and cultural components in public places and facilities.

CD-58 Include art and cultural components in areas of new development and redevelopment.

4 Transportation

The Transportation Element includes policies, programs, and standards that are intended to:

- Maintain mobility and reduce traffic in congested locations;
- Improve connections between different parts of the city;
- Further an integrated multi-modal transportation system that encourages transit use, walking, and biking; and
- Provide incentives for travel demand reduction.

The Transportation Element identifies future circulation needs for a long-range planning horizon, based on General Plan buildout (see Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management). As part of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the identified improvements will be studied in greater detail, and funding and implementation sources will be determined.

This element addresses issues from a citywide to neighborhood and block-level scales, as well as other issues that are countywide or regional in scope. Coordination with other jurisdictions will be necessary for improvements to US 101 and other roads outside the City's jurisdiction. Transit service improvements will require coordination with transit operators.

Transportation and land use are closely connected. Development imposes new demands on the transportation system, and the transportation system shapes the character and intensity of development over many years. Policies related to the physical framework for development that the circulation system is designed to serve are included in Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management and Chapter 3: Community Design. Provisions in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are intended to be complementary, so that land use and transportation are coordinated.

4.1 STREET SYSTEM

Rohnert Park's street network—including existing (1999) streets, roadway improvements, and new streets—is shown on Figure 4.1-1. US 101 bisects the city and serves as the main connection to cities to the north and south. Petaluma Hill Road and Stony Point Road are partially used as bypass routes for trips between Santa Rosa and Petaluma. State Route (SR) 116 connects Rohnert Park with Sebastopol and the Russian River area to the west, with Petaluma to the south, and the Valley of the Moon wine country to the east.

Rohnert Park has a hierarchical street system of city streets—characteristic of post-war suburban development—that separates fast-moving through-traffic from slow-moving local traffic. Arterial and collector streets provide circulation between and through neighborhoods, activity centers, and highways and other regional routes, and are characterized by higher traffic volumes and speeds and fewer curb cuts. In contrast, local streets have lower traffic volumes and speeds and provide curb cuts for most adjacent sites.

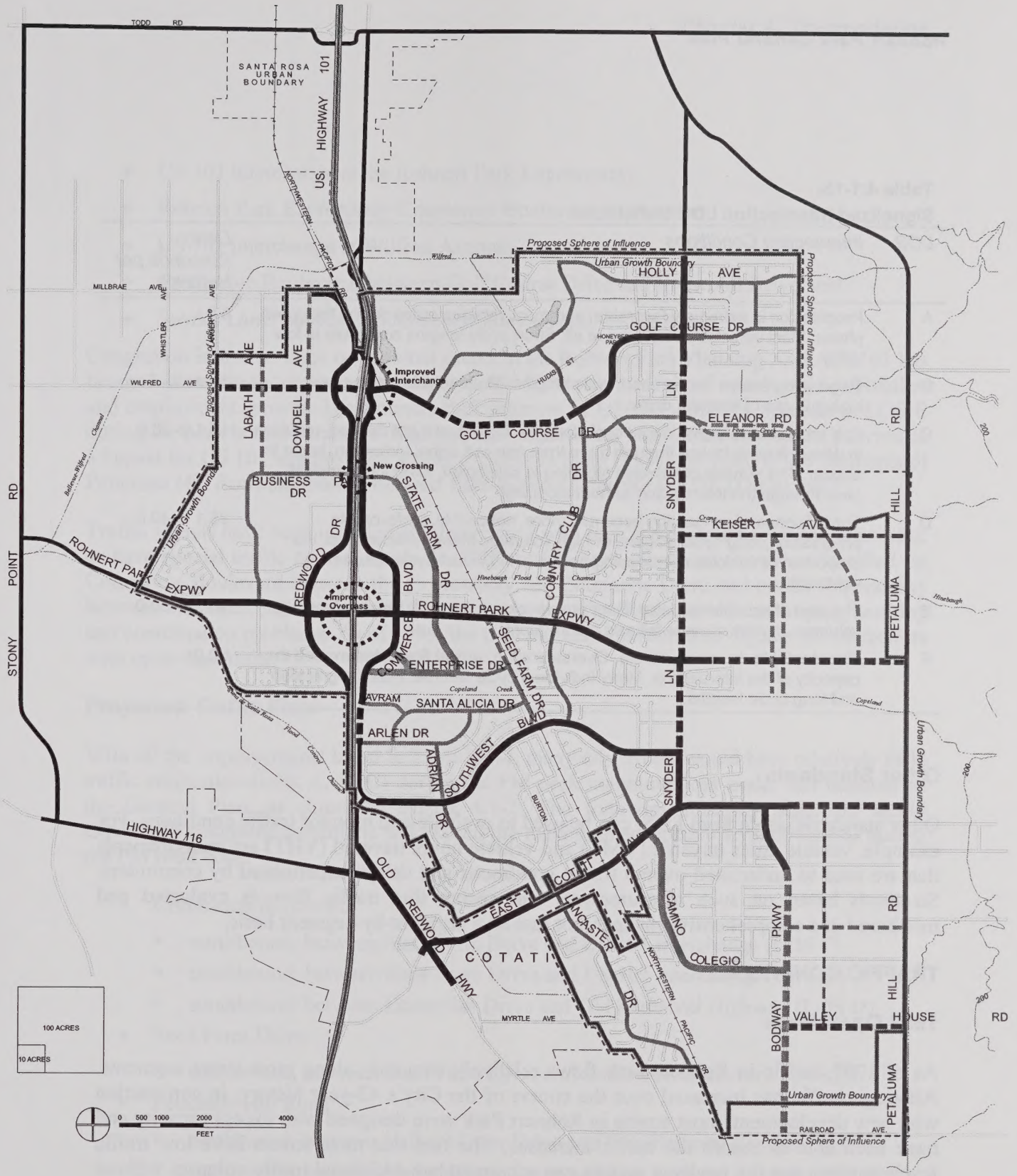
TRAFFIC FLOW STANDARDS

Levels of Service

The most widely used standard for evaluating traffic flow is called level of service (LOS), which is a grade level assigned to volume-capacity ratios. As shown in Table 4.1-1, LOS describes the quality of flow, ranging from free flow (LOS A) to extreme congestion associated with over-capacity conditions (LOS F). Signalized intersection LOS definitions are included in Table 4.1-2.

Table 4.1-1a:
Traffic Level of Service (LOS) Definitions

LOS	*Traffic Flow Conditions*	*Max Volume-Capacity Ratio*
A	***Free flow.*** No traffic-related restrictions on vehicle maneuverability or speed. Speed is determined by drivers' desires, speed limits, and physical roadway conditions.	0.6
B	***Stable flow***. Operating speeds start to be restricted; little or no restrictions on maneuverability from other vehicles. Slight delays.	0.7
C	***Stable flow***. Speeds and maneuverability more closely restricted. Occasional backups behind left-turning vehicles at intersections. Acceptable delays.	0.8
D	***Approaching unstable flow***. Queues develop. Temporary restrictions on speed may cause extensive delays. Little freedom to maneuver. Comfort and convenience low. Delays at intersections may exceed one or more signal changes.	0.9
E	***Unstable flow***. Stoppages of momentary duration. Low operating speeds. Maneuverability severely limited. Intolerable delays.	1.0
F	***Forced flow***. Gridlock conditions. Stoppages for long periods. Low operating speeds. Delays at intersections average 60 seconds or more.	>1.0



EXISTING PROPOSED

- Major Arterial (4 or 6 lanes)
- Minor Arterial (2 lanes)
- Major Collector (4 lanes)
- Minor Collector (2 lanes)

Figure 4.1-1

Master Street Plan

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Table 4.1-1b:
Signalized Intersection LOS Definitions

LOS	*Intersection Conditions*	*Delay (Seconds per Vehicle)*
A	Progression is extremely favorable, and most vehicles arrive during the green phase. Most vehicles do not stop at all. Short cycle lengths contribute to low delay.	5.0
B	Good progression and/or short cycle lengths. More vehicles stop causing higher levels of average delay.	5.1 to 15.0
C	Fair progression and/or longer cycle lengths. Individual cycle failures, resulting in drivers having to wait through more than one red signal indication, begin to appear. The number of vehicles stopping is significant, although many still pass through the intersection without stopping.	15.1 to 25.0
D	The influence of congestion becomes more noticeable. Unfavorable progression, long cycle lengths, or high volumes. Many vehicles stop, the proportion of vehicles not stopping declines. Individual cycle failures noticeable.	25.1 to 40.0
E	The limit of acceptable delay. Poor progression, long cycle lengths, and high volumes. Individual cycle failures are frequent.	40.1 to 60.0
F	Unacceptable to most drivers. Oversaturation, arrival flow rates exceed the capacity of the intersection. Many individual cycle failures. Poor progression and long cycle lengths.	60.0+

Other Standards

Other standards, aside from LOS, can be used to evaluate and monitor traffic conditions. For example, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle hours traveled (VHT) are measurements that are used to understand overall traffic conditions and delays experienced by commuters. Standards based on such measurements can ensure that traffic flow is evaluated and monitored in a comprehensive manner, not just on a segment-by-segment basis.

TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

1999 Operations

As of 1999, traffic in Rohnert Park flows relatively smoothly along most street segments. Although traffic has increased over the course of the City's 43-year history, in conjunction with new development, most streets in Rohnert Park were designed with excess capacity and have been able to absorb the traffic increases. The fact that most streets have low traffic levels suggest that the roadway system can accommodate additional traffic volumes without significant increases in delay in most places.

However, in 1999, several arterial streets experienced congestion during peak hours, and some intersections also experienced congested conditions and delay. The principal congestion locations within the city include:

- US 101 interchange at the Rohnert Park Expressway;
- Rohnert Park Expressway-Commerce Boulevard intersection;
- US 101 interchange at Wilfred Avenue;
- Commerce Boulevard, between Golf Course Drive and Redwood Drive; and
- Snyder Lane, between Southwest Boulevard and Keiser Road.

Congestion is also an issue on regional routes in the Rohnert Park Planning Area. US 101 has become increasingly congested throughout the 1990s, as a result of countywide population and employment growth. The Rohnert Park segment of US 101 currently operates at LOS E during the peak hours. Petaluma Hill Road also experiences heavy traffic, because it serves as a bypass for US 101 and provides access to Sonoma State University (SSU). The segments of Petaluma Hill Road adjacent to Rohnert Park generally operate at LOS D or worse.

Traffic signals have been installed at intersections with high traffic volumes or accident rates, or have special traffic control needs. In 1997, traffic light synchronization was installed on Commerce Boulevard between the Expressway and Enterprise Drive and on the Expressway between Commerce Boulevard and Snyder Lane, but was disconnected due to programming and coordination problems. As of 1999, the City has allocated funds to replace the controllers with up-to-date units.

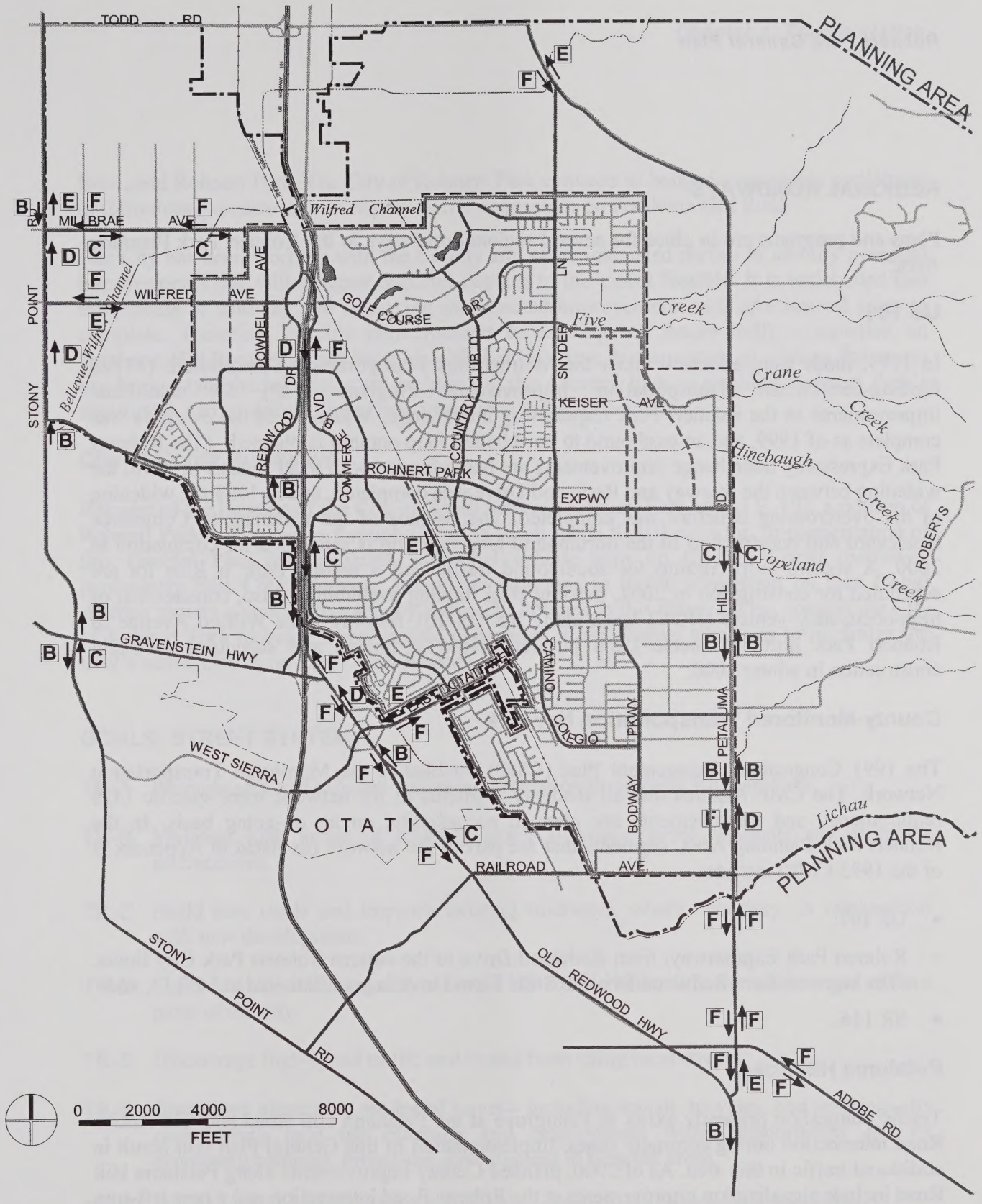
Projected Traffic Flow

With all the improvements listed in Table 4.1-4, many city streets would have relatively little traffic congestion (LOS A, B, C) during the PM peak commute hour under full buildout of the General Plan, as shown in Figure 4.1-2. The following roadway segments would experience congested conditions and exceed the maximum acceptable level of service during the PM peak hour:

- Commerce Boulevard
  - northbound, between State Farm Drive and US 101 interchange (LOS F)
  - southbound, between State Farm Drive and US 101 interchange (LOS D)
  - southbound, between Enterprise Drive and Old Redwood Highway (LOS D)
- Seed Farm Drive
  - southbound, between State Farm Drive and Southwest Boulevard (LOS E)
- Petaluma Hill Road
  - northbound, between Valley House Drive and East Railroad Avenue (LOS D)
  - southbound, between Valley House Drive and East Railroad Avenue (LOS F)
  - northbound, northwest of Snyder Lane (LOS E)
  - southbound, northwest of Snyder Lane (LOS F)
- Stony Point Road

  - northbound, north of Millbrae Avenue (LOS F)
- Millbrae Avenue
  - westbound, east of Stony Point Road (LOS F)
- Wilfred Avenue
  - eastbound, east of Stony Point Road (LOS E)
  - westbound, east of Stony Point Road (LOS F)

The traffic model used to identify these congested spots takes into account planned expansion of SSU to 10,000 FTE students. In addition to these traffic congestion spots during the PM peak commute hour, other school drop-off and pick-up locations will continue to experience congestion under General Plan buildout at the beginning and end of the school day. The SSU Concert Hall facility (in planning as of 1999) would be expected to generate traffic during special events. Most events would be expected to start and finish in the evenings, after the PM peak commute hour.



D Roadway Segment Level of Service
PM Peak Hour Mid-block LOS

Source: Crane Transportation Group, 1999

Note: All other areas would be at LOS A

Figure 4.1-2

Traffic Levels Of Service Under General Plan Buildout

REGIONAL ROADWAYS

Plans and programs are in place for several regional roadways in the Rohnert Park Planning Area:

US 101

In 1999, funds were allocated under the Metropolitan Transportation Commissions (MTC) funding-constrained Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for additional improvements to the Rohnert Park Expressway interchange. Widening of the overpass was complete as of 1999, and an eastbound to northbound loop onramp is planned. (The Rohnert Park Expressway interchange improvements are being funded with local funds.) In 1996, the widening between the freeway and Redwood Drive was completed, and in 1999 the widening of the overcrossing structure was completed. The balance of the widening to Commerce Boulevard and construction of the northbound loop on-ramp is scheduled for completion in 2000. A second loop onramp for southbound traffic and a second Park 'n Ride lot are scheduled for construction in 2002, pending final funding availability. Also, construction of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes along the US 101 freeway from Wilfred Avenue in Rohnert Park north to Steele Lane in Santa Rosa is funded and scheduled to begin construction in winter 2000.

County-Monitored Transportation Network

The 1991 Congestion Management Plan (CMP) established the Monitored Transportation Network. The CMP requires that all roadway segments in the network meet specific LOS requirements, and improvements are planned accordingly, on an on-going basis. In the Rohnert Park Planning Area, segments that are part of the network (as listed in Appendix B of the 1993 CMP) include:

- US 101;
- Rohnert Park Expressway, from Redwood Drive to the eastern Rohnert Park City limits. (The segment from Redwood Drive to State Farm Drive is grandfathered at LOS F); and
- SR 116.

Petaluma Hill Road

Traffic congestion presently exists in Penngrove at the Petaluma Hill Road and Old Adobe Road intersection during commute times. Implementation of this General Plan will result in additional traffic in this area. As of 2000, planned County improvements along Petaluma Hill Road include signalization improvements at the Roberts Road intersection and a new left-turn pocket at the Keiser Avenue intersection. Long-term solutions to traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road require a cooperative, regional approach by Sonoma County, the Penngrove community, Sonoma State University, and the cities of Cotati, Petaluma, Santa

Rosa, and Rohnert Park. The City of Rohnert Park commits to being a responsible participant in formulating measures to minimize traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road.

The City has been working with the County and other interested parties to identify potential improvements that will mitigate regional impacts to the extent feasible. It is anticipated that the process of studying and approving the selected improvements will take several years to complete. Therefore, specific improvements to existing and future traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road have not been identified at this time, but a process to address the issues has been established. Policies are included in this General Plan to establish Rohnert Park's commitment to contribute financially to the selected improvements.

City of Cotati Roadways

Because of the location of the City of Cotati between Rohnert Park and U.S. 101, a portion of Rohnert Park traffic passes through Cotati to reach the U.S. 101 corridor. Implementation of this General Plan may generate additional vehicle trips on City of Cotati roadways, particularly East Cotati Avenue. Long-term solutions to traffic congestion on East Cotati Avenue require a cooperative agency approach. Policies in this General Plan commit the City of Rohnert Park to being a responsible participant in developing measures to minimize the City's traffic effects on East Cotati Avenue.

GOALS: STREET SYSTEM

TR-A Promote safe and efficient vehicular circulation throughout Rohnert Park.

TR-B Maintain high levels of mobility along all major street segments and at major intersections.

TR-C Build new roads and improve existing roadways, where necessary, in conjunction with new development.

TR-D Improve vehicular connections across US 101, to better link the western and eastern parts of the city.

TR-E Discourage high-speed traffic and trucks from using local streets.

TR-F Encourage alternative modes of travel—including transit, bicycles, and walking—by coordinating land use planning and development with transportation and by promoting compact, mixed-use development in targeted areas.

TR-G Integrate street alignments with natural features, such as creeks and greenways.

TR-H Coordinate with regional agencies on transportation improvements in the Rohnert Park Planning Area.

POLICIES: STREET SYSTEM

Street Classifications and Standards

TR-1 Establish LOS C as the minimum standard for all arterial and collector roadway segments ("segments") and intersections, except for (1) those specified segments and intersections for which allowable LOS standards are otherwise established below; and (2) segments and intersections that are operating at LOS D or lower at the time an application for a development project or a specified plan is submitted if no feasible improvements exist to improve the LOS. The then-existing LOS may be permitted to be the standard for those segments and intersections in category (2), provided that the LOS not be permitted to deteriorate further due to the proposed development project or specific plan.

LOS shall be evaluated and determined on the basis of either the Highway Capacity Manual, or other means approved by the City.

Table 4.1-2
Roadways and Intersections

Segment	*From*	*To*	*Existing[1] LOS NB/SB[2]*	*Standard[3] LOS NB/SB*
Commerce Blvd.	*State Farm Dr.*	*U.S. 101 Northbound Ramps*	*D/A*	*F/D*
Commerce Blvd (southbound only)	Enterprise	Old Redwood Hwy	/A	D
Seed Farm Dr. (southbound only)	State Farm Dr.	Southwest Blvd.	/B	E
Petaluma Hill Rd.	Valley House Rd.	East Railroad Ave.	E/A	D/F
Intersections:				
E. Cotati Ave./Snyder Lane (mitigation in EIR is not feasible)			B	D
Wilfred Ave./Redwood Dr.			B	D
Wilfred Ave./U.S. 101 Southbound Ramps (new intersection)			N/A	D
Commerce Dr./Golf Course (a newly configured intersection)			B	D
Commerce Blvd/U.S. 101 Northbound Ramps			B	D

1. Existing LOS based on General Plan Revised Draft EIR, May 2000
2. Northbound/Southbound Direction
3. With mitigation identified in Revised Draft EIR

TR-2 Require mitigation measures, as needed, for new development that increases traffic such that LOS levels fall below the established minimum standard. Ensure that mitigation measures are coordinated with roadway improvements programmed for funding through transportation-related impact fees.

Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management requires project proponents to pay for transportation improvements made necessary by development. Policy TR-1 establishes minimum LOS standards. A traffic analysis will be required for each specific plan area and mitigation measures will be required, as appropriate, both within and outside the City limits.

TR-3 Establish additional traffic flow benchmarks in order to evaluate and monitor changes in traffic flow over time.

Potential traffic flow benchmarks include vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or vehicle hours traveled (VHT). Increases in VMT or VHT can be compared to increases in population. By way of example, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) establishes the ratio of population increase to VMT increase as the standard for evaluating compliance of local land use plans to the Clean Air Plan.

TR-4 Establish roadway classifications, as shown in Table 4.1-3. Require right-of-way dedications and design roadway improvements based on these classifications and Figure 4.1-1.

Roadways are differentiated by function, width, number of lanes, presence or absence of on-street parking, speed, volumes, access, and design characteristics. Because width is not the only determinant, collectors can have four lanes, and arterials can have two lanes; thus, some collectors will be wider than some arterials. Based on the classifications, the City will develop detailed engineering standards for roadway improvements.

Designation of an existing local street as an arterial or collector does not necessarily mean that traffic volumes or speed are expected to increase. Instead, it means that streets are designed with the site access, parking, number of lanes, and other characteristics shown in Table 4.1-3. Traffic calming devices can be used to control volume and speed.

Figure 4.1-1 serves as the Master Street Plan. It shows only arterial and collector streets in areas of new development. Local streets, which are not shown on the map, but are necessary to provide adequate site access, will be required during Subdivision Map approvals.

The design of certain streets may differ from the roadway classifications, in accordance with the policies in this chapter and Chapter 3: Community Design. These streets include the one-way collector couplet along the linear park, the one-way arterial couplet along Five Creek, and Snyder Lane, designed with a greenway along its eastern edge.

TR-5 Require provision of local streets in accordance with the City's Subdivision Ordinance and the policies and standards in Chapter 3: Community Design.

Roadway Improvements

TR-6 Use the City's Capital Improvements Program as a means to prioritize and undertake roadway improvements listed in Table 4.1-4 and shown on Figure 4.1-1.

Responsibilities for upgrading and maintaining roads that were outside the City's jurisdiction in 1999 (such as Keiser Avenue and Petaluma Hill Road) will be negotiated with the County and the County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) when the Sphere of Influence (SOI) is expanded.

TR-7 Explore the feasibility of extending Eleanor Avenue eastward to connect with Crane Canyon Road.

Table 4.1-3:
Roadway Classifications

	Function	*Traffic Lanes*[1]	*Intersections*	*Driveways*	*Left-turn Pockets*	*Signalization*	*On-street Parking*	*Traffic Speed*	*Traffic Volume*
Major Arterial	Provides circulation between neighborhoods, activity centers, and highways and other regional routes.	4 (6 in specific locations; see Figure 4.1-1)	Intersections with local streets are permitted, provided that they are right-turn-only and at least 200 feet apart. *This provision is intended to maximum access between neighborhoods, particularly between the University District and the SSU campus along the Rohnert Park Expressway.*	Driveways are generally not permitted. Driveways are permitted to major traffic generators, provided they are right-turn-only. A deceleration lane must be provided for each driveway. *Major traffic generators include areas designated for Regional Commercial, Office, Mixed Use, and High Density Residential uses.*	Yes	Signal preference and synchronization.	No	High	High
Minor Arterial	Provides circulation between neighborhoods, activity centers, and highways and other regional routes. Also provides circulation in rural and open space areas.	2	Intersections with local streets are permitted, provided that they are right-turn-only and at least 200 feet apart. *This provision is intended to maximum access between neighborhoods.*	Driveways are permitted, provided they are right-turn-only and at least 100 feet apart. A deceleration lane must be provided for each driveway. *Some Rural Estate Residential lots may have direct access from a minor arterial. A 100-foot spacing allows a shared driveway for two adjacent lots with 50-foot frontages. Wider spacing would impede access to those lots.*	Yes	As traffic conditions require.	No	High	Moderate
Major Collector	Provides circulation within and between neighborhoods.	4	No restriction.	Driveways are permitted, provided they are right-turn-only and at least 50 feet apart.	Yes	As traffic conditions require.	No	Moderate	High
Minor Collector	Provides circulation within and between neighborhoods.	2	No restriction.	No restriction.	No	As traffic conditions require.	Yes; Required on both sides of each segment of a one-way couplet	Moderate	Low
Local	Provides access to individual sites.	2	No restriction.	No restriction.	No	As traffic conditions require.	Yes	Low	Low

1. All streets shall have sidewalks. Bikeways shall be provided in accordance with Figure 4.4-1.

Table 4.1-4:
Roadway Improvements

Segment	*From*	*To*	*Improvement*
Infill			
Rohnert Park Expwy US 101	Commerce Blvd	Redwood Dr	Widen to 6 lanes
US 101 Crossing	State Farm Dr	Business Park Dr	New Minor Arterial
US 101 Underpass	Golf Course Dr	Wilfred Dr	New Major Arterial
Snyder Ln	Southwest Blvd	Hinebaugh Creek	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Seed Farm Dr	Enterprise Dr	Rohnert Park Expwy	New Minor Collector
Commerce Blvd	Copeland Creek	Arlen Dr	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Golf Course Dr	Fairway Dr	Country Club Dr	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Eastside			
Snyder Ln	North side of Creekside Middle School	South side of G Section Neighborhood	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Rohnert Park Expwy	Snyder Ln	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Petaluma Hill Rd	1,500 feet north of Keiser Ave	Railroad Avenue	Upgrade with intersection improvements and turn lanes (remains as 2 lanes, with designation as Minor Arterial).
Eleanor Ave	1999 City Limits	Rohnert Park Expwy	New Minor Collector
Keiser Ave	Snyder Ln	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Minor Arterial or Major Collector
New Linear Park Rd	Eleanor Rd	North side of SSU	New Minor Collector
Canon Manor and Southeast			
East Cotati Ave	Bodway Pkwy	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Valley House Dr	Bodway Pkwy	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Bodway Pkwy	Camino Collegio	Railroad Ave	New Major Collector
Alice Dr	Bodway Pkwy	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Minor Collector
Sturdevant Dr	Valley House Rd	East Cotati Ave	Upgrade to Minor Collector (north of Alice Dr) New Minor Collector (south of Alice Dr)

Table 4.1-4:
Roadway Improvements

Segment	*From*	*To*	*Improvement*
Westside			
Wilfred Ave	1999 City Limits	Urban Growth Boundary	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Dowdell Ave	Business Park Dr	Millbrae Ave	Upgrade to Minor Collector
Labath Ave	Business Park Dr	Urban Growth Boundary	Upgrade to Minor Collector (north of Wilfred Ave) New Minor Collector (south of Wilfred Ave)

Source: City of Rohnert Park, Crane Transportation Group

TR-8 Require that streets alongside the linear park and Five Creek on the eastside be designed as one-way couplets, as shown in Figure 4.1-1.

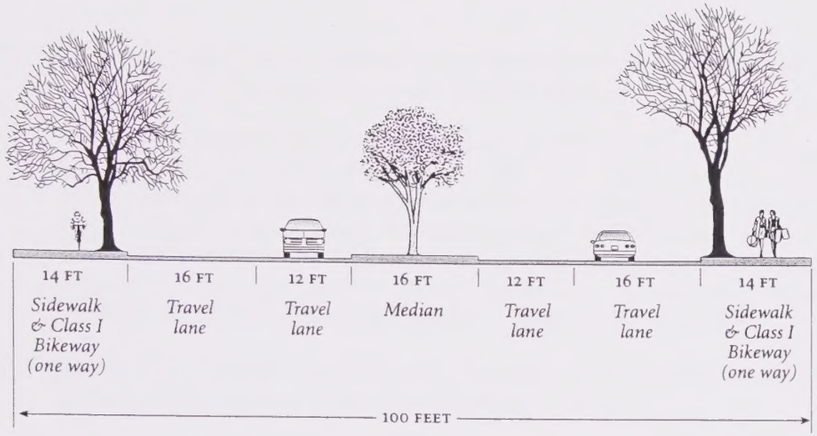
That is, a one-way street would run along each side of the linear park and Five Creek. The two one-way streets would run in opposite directions, in the same way as the lanes of an ordinary two-way street. Illustrative street sections for these streets are included in Chapter 3: Community Design.

TR-9 Design the Rohnert Park Expressway as a pedestrian-friendly boulevard between the 1999 City limits and Petaluma Hill Road. Require frontage streets to be provided, in order to facilitate vehicular access to sites along the Expressway, except along the SSU Concert Hall frontage.

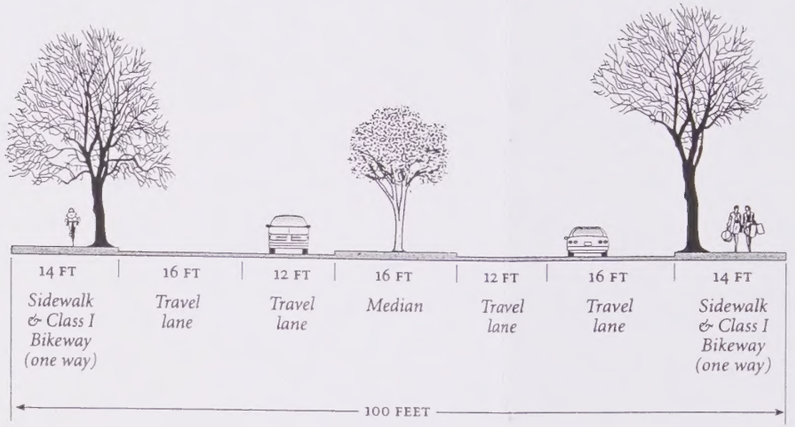
Illustrative street sections of the Expressway are included in Chapter 3: Community Design. A pedestrian-friendly environment would be created through provision of pedestrian amenities, as called for in Policy TR-38. Chapter 3 contains additional policies to promote a pedestrian-oriented environment in the University District specific plan area and to create attractive streetscapes throughout the city.

TR-10 Where street widening is proposed and the City owns an existing right-of-way that exceeds the minimum required width, according to the roadway classifications shown in Figure 4.1-3, the additional width shall be used for a greenway along one side of the street that has bikeways, pedestrian paths, and landscaping. Create smooth connections between other parts of the roadway that may have a narrower right-of-way or a different street configuration.

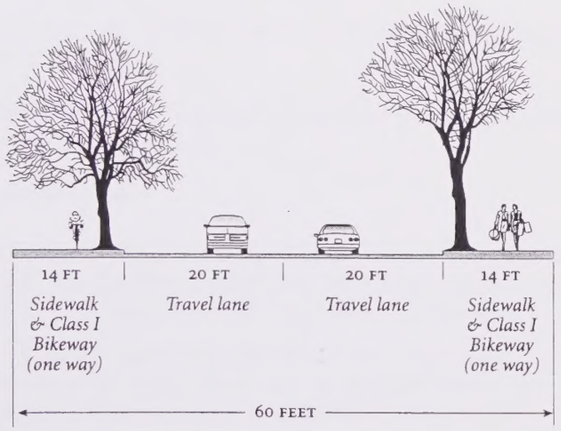
Prior to adoption of this Plan, arterials were required to be 120 feet wide in order to include on-street parking. As shown in Table 4.1-3 and Figure 4.1-3, the updated arterial roadway classification prohibits on-street parking and thus requires a narrower right-of-



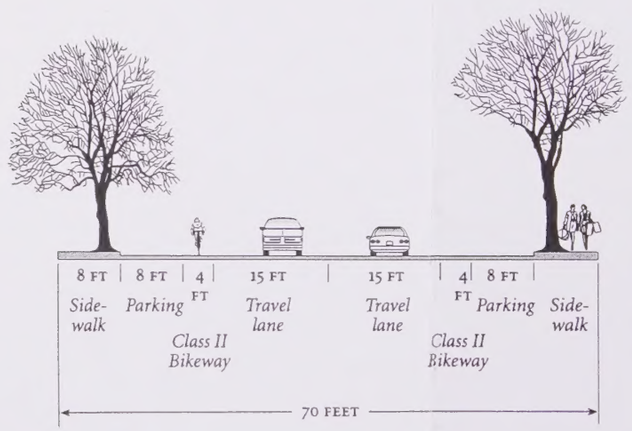
Major Arterial



Major Collector



Minor Arterial



Minor Collector

Figure 4.1-3

Illustrative Street Section Diagram for Roadway Classifications

way. As a result, excess right-of-way width may result along some arterial streets where the City has already secure the 120-foot right-of-way.

The primary example of such a street is Snyder Lane between the Creekside Middle School and the G Section neighborhood. The City owns a 120-foot right-of-way, but would only need 90 feet to accommodate a Major Arterial, as called for in Figure 4.1-1. Chapter 3: Community Design proposes specific street designs for Snyder Lane and establishes design policies for all such streets. The Rohnert Park Expressway does not have an excess right-of-way, because the 120-foot width is needed to accommodate frontage streets, as required in Policy TR-9.

TR-11 Use the City's Capital Improvements Program as the mechanism to prioritize and undertake the intersection improvements listed in Table 4.1-5.

This policy is intended to maintain intersections above the LOS standards established in Policy TR-1 and will help reduce traffic congestion, increase safety, and enhance traffic flows. Intersection improvements are designed to reduce delay and improve flow at congested intersections identified in the traffic model run conducted as part of the General Plan analysis

TR-12 Use the CIP to establish priorities for roadway improvements and prepare an action program for implementation.

Policy GM-15 in the Land Use and Growth Management Element calls for the City to prepare a CIP.

TR-13 Explore the feasibility of undertaking measures to address localized congestion at school drop-off and pick-up locations.

These would include:

- *Adjust signal timing at the Snyder Lane intersections with Rohnert Park Expressway, Southwest Boulevard, East Cotati Avenue, and at Creekside Middle School to accommodate traffic flow during school peak traffic periods.*
- *Identify traffic congestion problems that occur during school pick-up and drop-off periods for each school site in Rohnert Park, and implement appropriate measures to improve traffic conditions.*

Table 4.1-5:
Intersection Improvements

Intersection	*Improvement*
Wilfred Avenue/ Redwood Drive	Southbound: add an additional left turn lane; westbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, a combined through/right, an exclusive through and two exclusive left turn lanes; eastbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, a combined through-right, an exclusive through, and an exclusive left turn lane.
Wilfred Avenue/ U.S.101 Southbound Ramps	New intersection southbound: provide an exclusive southbound right, a combined right/left, and an exclusive left turn lane; westbound: provide two through lanes and an exclusive left turn lane; eastbound: provide two through lanes and an exclusive right turn lane.
Commerce Drive/ Golf Course Drive	Newly configured intersection southbound: provide a combined through/right and an exclusive left turn lane; westbound: provide a through/right, exclusive through, and an exclusive left turn lane; northbound: provide and exclusive right, exclusive through, and exclusive left turn lane; eastbound: provide two exclusive right, two through lanes and an exclusive left turn lane.
Rohnert Park Expressway/ U.S.101 Southbound Ramps	Westbound: widen to provide one additional through lane; eastbound: widen to provide one additional through lane.
Rohnert Park Expressway/ U.S.101 Northbound Ramps	Westbound: widen to provide one additional through lane.
Rohnert Park Expressway/ Commerce Drive	Southbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, an exclusive through, a combined through/right, and an exclusive left turn lane; westbound: widen to provide a combined through/right, two an exclusive through, and an exclusive left turn lane; eastbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, two through lanes, and two exclusive left turn lanes.
Rohnert Park Expressway/ Snyder Lane	Southbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, two through lanes, and an exclusive left turn lane; northbound: widen to provide one additional left turn lane.
Rohnert Park Expressway/ Petaluma Hill Road	Eastbound: widen to provide an exclusive right and an exclusive left turn lane.
East Cotati Avenue/ Snyder Lane	None needed.
East Cotati Avenue/ Petaluma Hill Road	Eastbound: widen to provide an exclusive right and an exclusive left turn lane.

Source: Crane Transportation Group.

Inter-jurisdictional Coordination

TR-14 Work with CalTrans to coordinate widening projects, interchange improvements, and other improvements along US 101.

TR-15 Encourage CalTrans, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to plan, fund, and implement improvements to the Wilfred Avenue interchange along US 101.

Improvement of the interchange would be appropriate in conjunction with construction of HOV lanes from Santa Rosa Avenue to Steele Lane in Santa Rosa. The Wilfred Avenue interchange, located about a ½-mile south of the Santa Rosa Avenue interchange, would serve as an important access point for HOVs.

TR-16 Encourage CalTrans, in cooperation with the City of Cotati, to relocate the northbound on-ramp at the SR 116 interchange along US 101.

Relocation of the onramp would potentially improve the flow of traffic accessing US 101 and would open up more space for potential improvements to Commerce Boulevard south of Southwest Boulevard.

TR-17 Encourage CalTrans, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to plan, fund, and implement high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes along US 101 between Santa Rosa Avenue and SR 116.

This policy is intended to reduce traffic congestion along the Rohnert Park segment of US 101. HOV lanes between Santa Rosa Avenue and SR 116 are listed under "Track 2" projects in the 1998 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The "Track 2" designation means that the project is unlikely to receive funding from MTC with available funds.

TR-18 Work with Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to maintain LOS standards along congested segments of the designated Monitored Transportation Network within the Rohnert Park Planning Area.

TR-19 Work with Sonoma County to coordinate improvements to major roads in the unincorporated parts of the Rohnert Park Planning Area.

Major roads include Petaluma Hill Road, Railroad Avenue, Stony Point Road, Wilfred Avenue, Millbrae Avenue, and the Old Redwood Highway.

TR-20 Work with Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to plan improvements to Petaluma Hill Road.

Petaluma Hill Road serves as a bypass to US 101 and experiences peak-hour congestion. Table 4.1-4 calls for new turn lanes and intersection improvements to Petaluma Hill Road.

TR-21 A. Work with Sonoma County, the City of Santa Rosa, the City of Cotati, and the City of Petaluma ("Contributing Jurisdictions") and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to plan and implement selected improvements necessary to mitigate impacts of increased traffic congestion on major roads and intersections in Penngrove ("Regional Mitigation Plan"). The Regional Mitigation Plan shall include those roadway and other improvements necessary to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic congestion on major roads and intersections in Penngrove ("Regional Mitigation Projects"), and a financing plan that explains how those improvements will be funded and that determines each Contributing Jurisdiction's fair share. The City shall contribute its fair share of the total cost of the Regional Mitigation Plan provided that the City's participation is roughly proportional to the traffic impacts from new development in Rohnert Park.

The City's payment or other contribution of its fair share shall be provided when all of the following occur: (1) A Regional Mitigation Project is approved by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, and each of the Contributing Jurisdictions; (2) a financing plan for the Regional Mitigation Project has been approved by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, and each of the Contributing Jurisdictions; (3) new development that contributes to the traffic impacts to be mitigated by the project receives final approval by the City; and (4) each of the Contributing Jurisdictions has appropriated its fair share to the Regional Mitigation Project. In the event that other jurisdictions do not contribute their fair share to the Regional Mitigation Project, and funding for their fair share is provided by some other means to ensure implementation of the Regional Mitigation Project, the City will contribute and be limited to its fair share.

Traffic congestion presently exists in Penngrove at the Petaluma Hill Road and Old Adobe Road intersection during commute times. Traffic congestion is a result from growth and commute patterns in Sonoma County, SSU, and the Cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati, and Petaluma. Implementation of this General Plan will result in additional traffic in this area. Long-term solutions to traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road require a cooperative, regional approach by Sonoma County, the Penngrove area, Sonoma State University, and the cities of Cotati, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, and Rohnert Park. The City of Rohnert Park commits to being a responsible participant in formulating measures to minimize traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road. The City of Rohnert Park encourages the cities of Cotati, Petaluma and Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, and SSU to adopt policies demonstrating their commitment to participating in long-term solutions to these problems.

During the period in which this General Plan was being drafted, the City worked with the County and other interested parties to identify potential improvements to mitigate regional traffic impacts. Because of the regional nature of issues and solutions, it is anticipated that the process of studying and approving the selected improvements will take several years to complete. Therefore, specific projects to mitigate existing and future traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road had not been identified at the time this General Plan was adopted. However, the City of Rohnert Park is committed to continuing its participation in this regional effort.

TR-21 B. Work with the City of Cotati and Sonoma State University to determine feasible measures to mitigate impacts of increased traffic on East Cotati Avenue (within the City of Cotati, beginning with the La Plaza intersection) associated with the proposed growth assumed in the 2000 General Plan. These measures shall be based on detailed (intersection-level) traffic studies that will be prepared with each specific plan. The Canon Manor Specific Plan, University Specific Plan, and Southeast Specific Plan shall include a detailed analysis of intersections within and outside of the city that are projected to be impacted by the specific plan project area; an analysis of the traffic impacts of the specific plan project area on East Cotati Avenue; a cumulative impact analysis; and feasible mitigation measures for lessening the potential traffic impacts.

Contribute the City's fair share to the feasible mitigation measures identified in each Specific Plan (Canon Manor Specific Plan, University Specific Plan, and the Southeast Specific Plan); provided that (1) the City's fair share is roughly proportional to the traffic impacts of development beyond the 1999 incorporated limits of the City of Rohnert Park; and (2) other jurisdictions that approve development that impacts traffic congestion at the impacted intersections on East Cotati Avenue contribute their fair share. In the event that the City of Cotati and/or SSU approve development that impacts East Cotati Avenue traffic congestion but do not contribute their fair share to fund the feasible mitigation measures, the City and City of Cotati will evaluate alternative feasible mitigation measures that can be implemented. The City's financial commitment is also contingent upon legal authority to collect payments through specific plans, development agreements, assessment districts, and/or ordinances to raise funds for needed improvements on East Cotati Avenue.

Because of the location of the City of Cotati adjacent to U.S. 101, a portion of the traffic passing through Cotati to reach the U.S. 101 corridor is generated from jurisdictions outside the City of Cotati. Implementation of this General Plan may generate additional vehicle trips on City of Cotati roadways, particularly East Cotati Avenue. Long-term solutions to traffic congestion on East Cotati Avenue require a cooperative regional approach. Policies in this General Plan commit the city of Rohnert Park to being a responsible participant in developing and funding these solutions. Development within the Specific Plan areas may occur without implementation of the identified mitigation measures in the event that funding is not available from other jurisdictions to construct the improvements.

4.2 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Policies in this section are designed to reduce peak-hour traffic congestion by limiting increases in transportation demand. The policies provide an alternative to roadway improvements, by making more efficient use of the existing transportation network. A variety of strategies can be used to limit demand, from emphasizing transit, ridesharing, and non-auto alternatives for the commute to work, to creating pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly development, to limiting excessive amounts of parking, which serves as a major incentive to drive.

Transportation demand management (TDM) programs are provided by employers to reduce the amount of peak-hour traffic by encouraging their employees to use modes other than single-occupancy automobiles for travel to the workplace and to travel during non-peak times. While public agencies can no longer impose mandatory employer-based trip reduction programs[1], businesses can voluntarily participate in TDM programs, and local jurisdictions can still require TDM measures as mitigation for transportation and air quality impacts, under the auspices of CEQA review.[2]

GOALS: TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

TR-I Develop a comprehensive transportation demand management (TDM) program that preserves Rohnert Park's quality of life, while maintaining a positive business environment.

TR-J Reduce peak-hour traffic congestion and associated impacts, including air pollution, energy consumption, and noise.

TR-K Reduce the need for roadway improvements by making more efficient use of existing roads, bikeways, transit service, and other transportation facilities and services.

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[1] The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Regulation 13, Rule 1, requiring employers with over 100 employees to decrease the average vehicle ridership, was overturned. According to Health and Safety Code §40717.9(a), "a [air quality] district, congestion management agency, ... or any other public agency shall not require an employer to implement an employee trip reduction program unless the program is expressly required by federal law and the elimination of the program will result in the imposition of federal sanctions..."

[2] Health and Safety Code § 40717.5(c); § 40717.6. The law also states that local jurisdictions can require trip reduction measures pursuant to a voter-mandated growth management program. However, no voter-mandated program has been proposed in Rohnert Park as of 1999. Growth management policies in the Land Use and Growth Management Element have not been subject to voter approval.

POLICIES: TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

TR-22 In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, adopt a non-mandatory employer-based transportation demand management (TDM) program for Rohnert Park businesses.

This policy is intended to reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicles for the commute to work. While voluntary, a City program can alleviate the cost of establishing an independent program for each individual business. For example, the program could provide carpool/vanpool matching, dividing the cost of coordinating the program among several businesses and thus removing a barrier to TDM.

Voluntary programs have come into use since the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) Rule 13 was overturned. In the 1997 Clean Air Plan (CAP), BAAQMD establishes Transportation Control Measure #1 to "support voluntary employer-based trip reduction programs."

TR-23 Allow reductions in transportation impact fees on new non-residential development commensurate with provision of transportation demand management (TDM) measures, and develop reduction parameters.

This policy is intended to serve as an incentive for provision of alternatives to travel by single-occupancy vehicles. Project proponents taking advantage of reductions must agree to adopt and implement specified TDM measures as a condition of project approval.

As part of an ordinance establishing impact fees and other funding mechanisms for infrastructure improvements, the City shall determine what TDM measures are eligible for impact fee reductions. Also, the City shall determine the relative trip reduction benefit of each TDM measure and assign each measure an impact fee credit. Measures with the greatest trip reduction would have the greatest credit. The City should also consider imposing a maximum total reduction, to ensure that funding for public facility improvements in the CIP is not depleted.

TR-24 Adopt and implement a TDM program to encourage the use of alternative transportation modes by City employees.

Potential components of the program include:

- *Designated commute coordinator/manager;*
- *Carpool/vanpool match program;*
- *Preferential parking for carpools and vanpools;*
- *Paid parking;*
- *Parking space cash-out for commuters who ride transit, walk, or bike.*

- *Secure bicycle storage facilities;*
- *Onsite shower facilities for employees who bike to work;*
- *Transit subsidies;*
- *Guaranteed ride home program;*
- *Telecommuting policy;*
- *Flex-time policy (4-40 or 9-80 schedules); and*
- *Educational program.*

TR-25 As part of the Zoning Ordinance update and preparation of specific plans, establish parking standards that help reduce automobile trips by:

- Reducing parking requirements *for Mixed Use development and development adjacent to the University District Linear Park;*
- *Allowing shared parking facilities wherever possible, to reduce the total number of required parking stalls; and*
- *Considering use of cash-in-lieu payments for required parking in Mixed Use areas.*

The 1999 Zoning Ordinance allows cash-in-lieu payments in the C-R Regional Commercial zoning district. Cash-in-lieu payments can also be considered for Mixed Use areas, where the pedestrian-oriented environment reduces the need for parking. The Zoning Ordinance will need to be amended to allow for shared parking, where the total number of required parking spaces for two adjacent uses is reduced to reflect differences in peak-hour parking need.

4.3 TRANSIT

As of 1999, Rohnert Park was served by three transit agencies:

- *Golden Gate Transit*, which *is oriented mainly to commuters traveling to Marin County and San Francisco;*
- *Sonoma County Transit, which serves Rohnert Park and other destinations within Sonoma County; intra-city routes operate on 30-minute to one-hour intervals;*
- *Rohnert Park Sunshine Bus, which* serves elderly and disabled people.

These bus routes offer alternatives to auto use for regional, countywide, and local trips. Buses running to San Francisco via Golden Gate Transit carry the most passengers over the course of a year. However, Sonoma County Transit buses also carry a substantial number of riders, particularly between Petaluma and Santa Rosa. Ridership information by transit route is presented in Table 4.3-1.

Table 4.3-1:
Transit Ridership by Route, 1998

Agency	*Route Number*	*Route Description*	*Total Annual Ridership*
Golden Gate Transit[1]	80	Santa Rosa to San Francisco	491,260
	72	Santa Rosa to San Francisco	212,510
	74	Santa Rosa to San Francisco	249,602
	71	Santa Rosa to San Rafael	34,862
	75	Santa Rosa to San Rafael	47,844[2]
	76	Rohnert Park to San Francisco	187,769[2]
Sonoma Co. Transit	10/11	Local	59,997
	12/14	Local	95,976
	26	Sebastopol to SSU	11,676[2]
	44	Santa Rosa to Petaluma	233,213[2]
	46	Santa Rosa to SSU	23,987[2]
	48	Santa Rosa to Petaluma	173,513[2]
Rohnert Park Sunshine Bus		Local, Elderly / Disabled	1,980

1. Total ridership numbers for Golden Gate Transit pertain only to patrons who originate or terminate in Sonoma County.
2. 1996-97.

Source: Crane Transportation Group

RAIL SERVICE

The railroad line that runs through Rohnert Park has historically been used for freight service. The segment of railway through Rohnert Park is owned by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Authority, and leased to the North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA), a consortium of local government agencies. By the early 1990s, the line had fallen into disrepair, and train traffic had declined. The line was closed to rail traffic in 1998 as the result of storm water damage, and the line was reopened for minimal train service as of 1999.

The line has been considered for commuter rail service, as a strategy to alleviate existing and projected traffic congestion along US 101. The SCTA and the Marin Countywide Planning Agency (MCPA) conducted the 1997 Sonoma-Marin Multi-modal Transportation and Land Use Study, which recommended a 19-station commuter rail line between the Larkspur Ferry Landing and Windsor, with a station in Rohnert Park. The study also recommended a series of HOV lanes along US 101.

Funding

Proposition 116 funding was used for purchase of the NP right-of-way, as the first step toward providing commuter rail service. However, additional Capital Rehabilitation funds will not be released until Sonoma and Marin counties can demonstrate a permanent source of operating funds. Measure C was placed on the November 1998 ballot in both counties to provide the operating funds, but failed to obtain a majority vote. It would have established a ½-cent sales tax and raised $950 million. The associated Measure B, which listed specific projects to be funded by Measure C, passed by 72 percent. In the March 2000 ballot, both pro-rail and pro-Highway 101 widening measures were placed on the ballot in the County, but neither secured the necessary two-thirds margin.

TRANSIT CENTER

Approximately $750,000 of federal Transportation Efficiency Act (TEA21) funds have been earmarked for an intermodal (bus and rail) transit center in Rohnert Park, Cotati, and Santa Rosa, as part of a $6 million earmark for transit centers countywide. The funds are available until October 2001. Transit centers funded with this earmark must have the potential for a future rail connection.[3] As of 1999, SCTA is implementing the county's first transit station in Windsor.

PARK-AND-RIDE

Free-of-charge commuter parking lots in the Rohnert Park area include:

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[3] Telephone Conversation with Brian Albee, Sonoma County Department of Public Works and Transportation, July 29, 1999.

1. CalTrans lot, at the southwest quadrant of the US 101-Rohnert Park Expressway interchange.
2. Rohnert Park City lot, at the northwest corner of Roberts Lake Road and Golf Course Drive.
3. CalTrans lot, on Saint Joseph Way, off of Old Redwood Highway in Cotati.

An additional commuter parking lot is planned for the northeastern quadrant of the US 101-Rohnert Park Expressway interchange. Joint-use commuter parking is also available at 4627-4675 Snyder Lane, north of Eleanor Avenue.

GOALS: TRANSIT

TR-L Promote local and regional public transit serving Rohnert Park and facilitate transfers between transit routes and operators.

TR-M Continue to encourage park-and-ride activity, in order to reduce congestion along US 101.

POLICIES: TRANSIT

Bus Service

TR-26 Work with Sonoma County Transit and Golden Gate Transit to increase bus service between Rohnert Park and other cities in the Bay Area.

TR-27 Work with Sonoma County Transit and Golden Gate Transit to develop an expanded bus route system, in order to serve areas of new development in Rohnert Park.

TR-28 Work with Sonoma State University (SSU) to explore the feasibility of a campus shuttle.

Ideally, a campus shuttle would connect the SSU campus, the adjacent University District, the transit center (if it is developed; see Policy TR-34), the City Center, major commercial centers, and high-density residential areas.

TR-29 Explore the feasibility of offering additional student discounts on monthly bus passes, in consultation with Sonoma State University (SSU), Sonoma County Transit, and Golden Gate Transit.

Sonoma County Transit already offers a $30 monthly student bus pass, compared to the $40 adult pass. Golden Gate Transit does not offer a college student discount (only students under the age of 18 are offered discounts), and there is no discounted student rate for the Sonoma SuperPass, which allows unlimited rides on both Golden Gate Transit and Sonoma County Transit at a monthly cost of $70 for adults.

Providing additional discounts for students would help support transit use by a particularly transit-dependent population.

Bus Stops and Shelters

TR-30 In consultation with Golden Gate Transit and Sonoma County Transit, determine appropriate locations of new bus stops, in conjunction with increased service and expanded routes.

Policy TR-26 calls for increased bus service, and Policy TR-27 for an expanded bus route system to serve areas of new development.

TR-31 Require project proponents to provide bus stops and shelters in conjunction with new development.

Policies for adequate public facilities in the Growth Management Element, which require developers to provide adequate public facilities, encompass provision of related bus stops and shelters. Criteria for allocating responsibilities will need to be developed.

TR-32 Work with Sonoma County Transit, Golden Gate Transit, and private developers to ensure that bus stops and shelters adhere to the following standards:

- Bus pull-outs shall be required at bus stop locations, in order to prevent stopping *buses from interfering with traffic flow;*
- *Bus stop locations shall allow direct, convenient pedestrian access to adjacent development;*
- *Pedestrian access to bus stops shall be safe and comfortable;*
- *Bus shelters shall provide adequate protection from sun, wind, and rain;*
- *Bus stops and shelters shall display schedules and routes; and*
- *Bus shelters shall be adequately designed and sized to accommodate waiting passengers during* inclement weather.

Rail Service and Transit Center

TR-33 Encourage the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to continue in their efforts to develop commuter rail service along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) right-of-way. Work with SCTA to resolve issues regarding commuter rail design and operation in Rohnert Park, including:

- Location of rail *stations;*
- *Design of roadway crossings at the Rohnert Park Expressway, Southwest Boulevard, and Golf* Course Drive; and

- Noise impacts and mitigation measures.

TR-34 Undertake a comprehensive study to evaluate and implement a multi-hub transit corridor along Rohnert Park Expressway with the following characteristics:

- Rail transit *station in the vicinity of the Rohnert Park Expressway/Northwestern Pacific right-of-way;*
- *A bus transfer station, either in the vicinity of the station or in another location with frequent shuttle connections between the rail and the bus stations;*
- *Frequent shuttles between the rail/bus station(s) and the University District and Sonoma State University; and*
- *Parking either in vicinity* of the rail/bus station (s) or in a location with shuttle access to the station (s).

A transit center or corridor would provide a convenient place for transfers between bus routes and lines. As of 2000, the Rohnert Park Expressway-Commerce Boulevard intersection served as an informal transfer area, because many bus routes stop there. A new transit center (either bus only, or bus and rail together) could potentially be located closer to pedestrian-oriented activity centers—such as the University District and City Center—because walking and riding transit are complementary modes of travel. Locations along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) railroad right-of-way could also potentially allow for future rail connections. A transit center, as opposed to the intersection, could also be associated with a park-and-ride and drop-off facilities.

Park-and-Ride Lots

TR-35 Work with CalTrans to implement plans for the park-and-ride lot in the northeast quadrant of the Rohnert Park Expressway interchange along US 101.

The 1998 TIP allocated funding for the new park-and-ride lot. As of 1999, CalTrans started planning and preliminary design. However, the project was not initiated and may require additional funding.

TR-36 Explore the feasibility of additional park-and-ride lots at the Rohnert Park Expressway and Wilfred Avenue interchanges along US 101.

In the future, additional park-and-ride facilities may be warranted in conjunction with the construction of HOV lanes along US 101. The HOV lanes that are being planned and built through Santa Rosa will terminate at Wilfred Avenue, making that interchange a strong candidate for additional park-and-ride facilities.

4.4 PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION

Rohnert Park's land uses and hierarchical street system were designed primarily for automobile circulation (see Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management and Section 4.1). While ensuring that automobile circulation flow is maintained, this General Plan makes a commitment to improved pedestrian and bicycle circulation, in order to provide alternatives to auto use.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

While many city streets have sidewalks, trees, and lighting, limited connections between neighborhoods and the distance between neighborhoods and activity centers (including SSU, commercial centers, offices, industrial areas) discourage walking for the purposes of going to work, shopping, or running errands. Walking is a major mode of travel for school-age children.

The city's numerous parks, recreational facilities, and open space areas encourage pedestrian trips for recreational purposes. Local streets within residential neighborhoods typically have slow-moving, low-volume traffic, allowing for comfortable pedestrian circulation between residences, schools, and neighborhood parks.

BIKEWAYS

In 1995, bikeways existed in several parts of the city but did not form a comprehensive network, discouraging extensive bicycle use. In response to this deficiency, the City prepared and adopted the 1995 Bicycle Master Plan to establish a complete network of bikeways that connects all the different parts of the city. The Plan established three bikeway classifications:

- *Class I. Paved paths on separate rights-of-way.*
- *Class II. Striped lanes within roadways, separate from vehicular travel lanes, parking, bus stops, and sidewalks.*
- *Class III.* Designated bicycle routes within roadways, shared with either pedestrians or motorists.

As of 1999, many Class II bike paths outlined in the Master Plan were implemented, and some Class I bikeways were completed. The improvements have increased safety, facilitated bicycle access to sites throughout the city, allowed for greater choice in transportation modes, and improved recreational amenities. Bike commuters include an active bike club at the Hewlett Packard complex and student riders at SSU, and children make use of bikeways for going to school. Bikeways also are popular with recreational users on the weekends.

GOALS: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION

TR-N Promote safe, efficient, and comfortable circulation for cyclists and pedestrians throughout Rohnert Park.

TR-O Create pedestrian-friendly activity centers that encourage local walking trips between to and from adjacent uses.

TR-P Provide continuous, direct pedestrian routes and bikeways between and through neighborhoods and activity centers, and job centers and residential areas, including the University District, the City Center, and commercial and industrial areas.

TR-Q Provide pedestrian routes and bikeways that link residential areas to city parks and open space areas outside the city.

TR-R Continue to develop a comprehensive network of bikeways that promote bicycle riding for transportation and recreation.

TR-S Provide adequate bicycle parking facilities.

POLICIES: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION

Pedestrian Circulation

TR-37 Provide continuous sidewalks along all existing and future streets.

The City shall establish specific engineering standards for sidewalks.

TR-38 Establish pedestrian-friendly amenities along streets that run through or adjacent to areas designated for Mixed Use, High Density Residential, Public, or Parks. Ensure that:

- Sidewalks are wide enough to *accommodate pedestrian use;*
- *Sidewalk intersection bulbs (rounded curves that extend the area of the sidewalk intersection corner) are provided to reduce the walking distance across streets;*
- *Pedestrian lighting, benches, street trees, and other sidewalk amenities are provided; and*
- *Landscaping complements pedestrian circulation* and eliminates barriers to pedestrian access.

  Pedestrian-friendly environments are created not only by amenities, but also by the use, intensity, location, orientation, and character of buildings. Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management includes policies to establish uses and intensities that encourage pedestrian activity in key areas

throughout the city, particularly in the University District and City Center. Chapter 3: Community Design includes policies that promote pedestrian-friendly building design. Street connections and block size also influence the accessibility and permeability of areas to pedestrians. Policies in Chapter 3: Community Design address these issues as well.

Pedestrian connections between the University District and SSU are particularly important. Heavy high-speed traffic along the Rohnert Park Expressway could potentially discourage pedestrian activity. Policy TR-9 calls for frontage streets along the SSU segment of the Expressway, to create a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

Bicycles

TR-39 Update the Bicycle Master Plan to incorporate Class I bikeways shown in Figure 4.4-1. Develop locations and alignments for Class II and III bikeways.

Class I bikeways are located along major streets, as well as creeks, linear parks, open space areas, and the NP railroad right-of-way. Class II and III bikeways are not shown in Figure 4.4-1.

TR-40 Implement comprehensive design standards for bikeways, as part of the Bicycle Master Plan. Ensure that adequate lighting, signage, and other amenities are provided.

In 1995 Bicycle Master Plan, classifications for Class I, II, and III bikeways are based on the State Street and Highways Code and specify function, typical width, road striping, and signage. Separately, Goal 6 of the Plan calls for amenities such as water fountains, emergency telephones, lighting, and convex mirrors at blind intersections. Comprehensive design standards would consolidate existing standards and provide more detail on the design, function, and character of bikeway classifications.

TR-41 Ensure that bikeways are continuous and interconnected, and that access points into bikeways minimize conflicts with pedestrian and traffic circulation.

The 1995 Bicycle Master Plan calls for traffic lights where bikeways cross busy streets, removal of barriers to bicycle crossings at these locations, and consideration of bicycle-activated signals at major intersections. These policies already help minimize conflicts between bicycles and other modes of traffic.

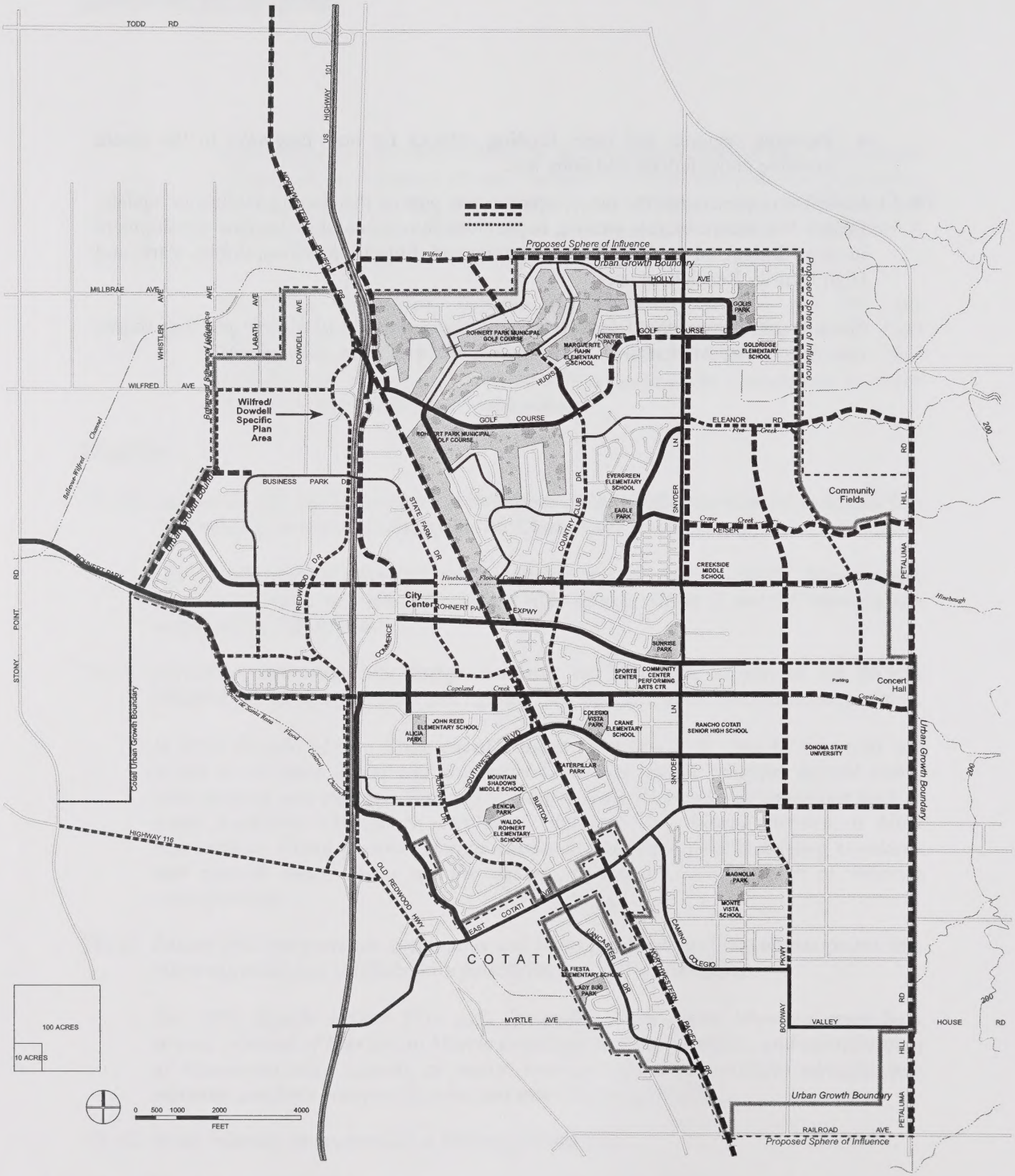
TR-42 Make bikeway improvements a funding priority by:

- Incorporating bikeway *improvements as part of the CIP;*
- *Requiring developers to provide bikeways and associated amenities in conjunction with new development; and*

- Pursuing regional and other funding sources for new bikeways to the extent possible under federal and State law.

TR-43 Establish requirements for bicycle parking as part of the Zoning Ordinance update. Ensure that secure bicycle parking is provided in conjunction with new development in areas designated for Mixed Use, Commercial, Industrial, Office, Public, Park, and High Density Residential uses.

These requirements could include the minimum number of bicycle parking spaces that must be provided, as well as the type of rack or locker, for each use.



Class I Bike Path

Class I Bike Path (proposed)

Class II Bike Lane

Class II Bike Lane (proposed)

Class III Bike Route

Figure 4.4-1

Bicycle System

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

5 Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities

Open space areas within and around Rohnert Park are valuable resources and provide the city a scenic setting. Parks are a necessity for active and passive recreation. The Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities Element addresses these and other related topics. Also addressed in this Element are public facilities, including schools, water service, and wastewater collection, and disposal.

According to Government Code § 65910, four types of open space must be considered in the General Plan. These are addressed in different parts of the Plan, as described below:

1. *Open space for the preservation of natural resources*: Section 5.1 addresses farmland and open space conservation; open space as habitat for biological resources is addressed in Chapter 6: Conservation;
2. *Open space for the managed production of resources*: Farmland resources are addressed in Section 5.1;
3. *Open space for outdoor recreation*: Section 5.2 addresses park land and outdoor recreational facilities; and
4. *Open space for public health and safety*: Chapter 7: Health and Safety addresses seismic conditions and flood hazards.

5.1 OPEN SPACE

Since Rohnert Park's founding in the 1950s, the city has maintained a compact urban form surrounded by open space. With the exception of the City of Cotati to the southwest and rural residential subdivisions such as Canon Manor, the sense of open space around the city's edges is pervasive. While much of the open space is used for grazing, orchards and cultivated land as well as Crane Creek Regional Park are also notable uses. This element seeks to ensure that land outside the designated extent of urban uses in the Planning Area is maintained as open space. In addition, it addresses issues related to buffers between urban uses and open space.

Two classifications of open space are included in the Land Use and Growth Management Element (Chapter 2):

- *Open Space for Environmental Conservation* includes sites with environmental and/or safety constraints, such as riparian corridors, sensitive habitats, and wetlands (see Chapter 6: Conservation).
- *Open Space for Agriculture and Resource Management* includes orchards and cropland, grasslands, cemeteries, and rural residential areas. This classification also accommodates greenbelts and urban buffers - open space, park land, and agricultural areas outside urban areas, as opposed to urban parks, which are located within developed areas and serve as outdoor recreational facilities.

Excluding creekside greenways and parkways alongside streets, no designated open space is located within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Between the UGB and the Sphere of Influence (SOI), two open space areas are included – the 50-acre Community Fields, located north of Crane Creek, and a 30-acre open space buffer south of G Section. In addition, open space buffers are located between within the SOI between Petaluma Hill Road and the UGB in the University District and in the southeast.

OPEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY SEPARATORS

One of Sonoma County's unique characteristics is the diversity and abundance of open space. Approximately 92 percent of the County's land area is used for mixed agricultural-residential uses, intensive and extensive agriculture, resource extraction, and watershed-wildlife habitat. Economic pressure on farmers and ranchers to subdivide or convert their land to non-agricultural uses is increasing with growth. Conflicts between urban and agricultural also occur at urban/agricultural edges. The reduction of this pressure and competition, through mechanisms such as the designation of community separators and agricultural preserves under the Williamson Act, is essential to the long-term preservation of open space. Open Space around Rohnert Park is shown on Figure 5.1-1.

Community Separators

Two Community Separators are located in the Rohnert Park-Cotati area. The Petaluma-Rohnert Park separator is located between Petaluma, Penngrove, and Rohnert Park-Cotati. The second separator is generally located north and northwest of Rohnert Park, between Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa (see Figure 5.1-1). Measure D, approved by County voters in November 1996, establishes procedures for changes to boundaries or use regulations applicable to Community Separators established in the 1989 County General Plan. Essentially, the Measure establishes that, with limited exceptions, County voter approval is required for changes (in use or boundaries) of the separators.

However, because the County's ability to maintain the separators is limited without the cooperation of the cities, the Measure "associated" each separator with an adjacent city. The Rohnert Park-Santa Rosa "north" Separator (north of the flood control channel, and the portion east of US 101) is associated with the City of Santa Rosa, while the Northwest Community Separator south of the flood control channel is associated with Rohnert Park. (See Figure 2.2-1). Such an initiative has been passed by Santa Rosa, but not by Rohnert Park voters. Thus, while the North Separator is currently governed by the provisions of Measure D, the Northwest Separator is not. This General Plan outlines efforts, including those requiring City/County cooperation, to mitigate impacts of growth into the Northwest Community Separator.

This General Plan designates approximately 180 acres of Northwest Community Separator land for inclusion in the urban area. It is LAFCO's policy to disapprove annexations within the designated Community Separator. Pursuant to LAFCO and County direction, removal of the Community Separator will require mitigation in the form of providing permanent protection of other similar open space land within the Rohnert Park Planning Area. A four-member policy makers' "Working Group" has been formed between the City and County to address the Community Separator mitigation issue. This General Plan includes provisions for effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure implementation of a Community Separator mitigation program.

Williamson Act Lands

Several agricultural sites surrounding Rohnert Park are designated agricultural preserves under Williamson Act contracts. The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Government Code § 51200 et seq.), is intended to discourage the unnecessary conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses and conserve land within a scenic highway corridor or wildlife habitat. Agricultural preserves are assessed with lower property tax rates, providing owners with an incentive to continue agricultural activity. The initial term of the contract is ten years and is automatically renewed each year unless cancelled.

Three parcels outside the existing and proposed City limits are currently subject to Williamson Act contracts (1999). One of these parcels is located just west of Petaluma Hill

Road and north of Keiser Avenue. The two other parcels are located with the Community Separators.

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District was established as part of the Open Space Element of the Sonoma County General Plan to acquire and administer open space lands. The formation of the District and the establishment of a 1/4-cent sales tax to fund land purchases and conservation easements over 20 years were approved by County voters in 1990.

The District adopted an Interim Acquisition Plan in 1991 and an Acquisition Plan in 1993, which was revised in 2000. The new plan establishes five-year objectives, specific selection criteria, and implementation strategies, and includes greenbelt purchases as a priority. The District collects applications from landowners, working only with willing sellers. As of 1999, over 25,000 acres have been protected under the program. There have been six District transactions in the Rohnert Park area. Three transactions involved the purchase of conservation easements, and three involved the purchase of a fee title. A total of 360 acres of open space have been preserved, as shown in Figure 5.1-1.

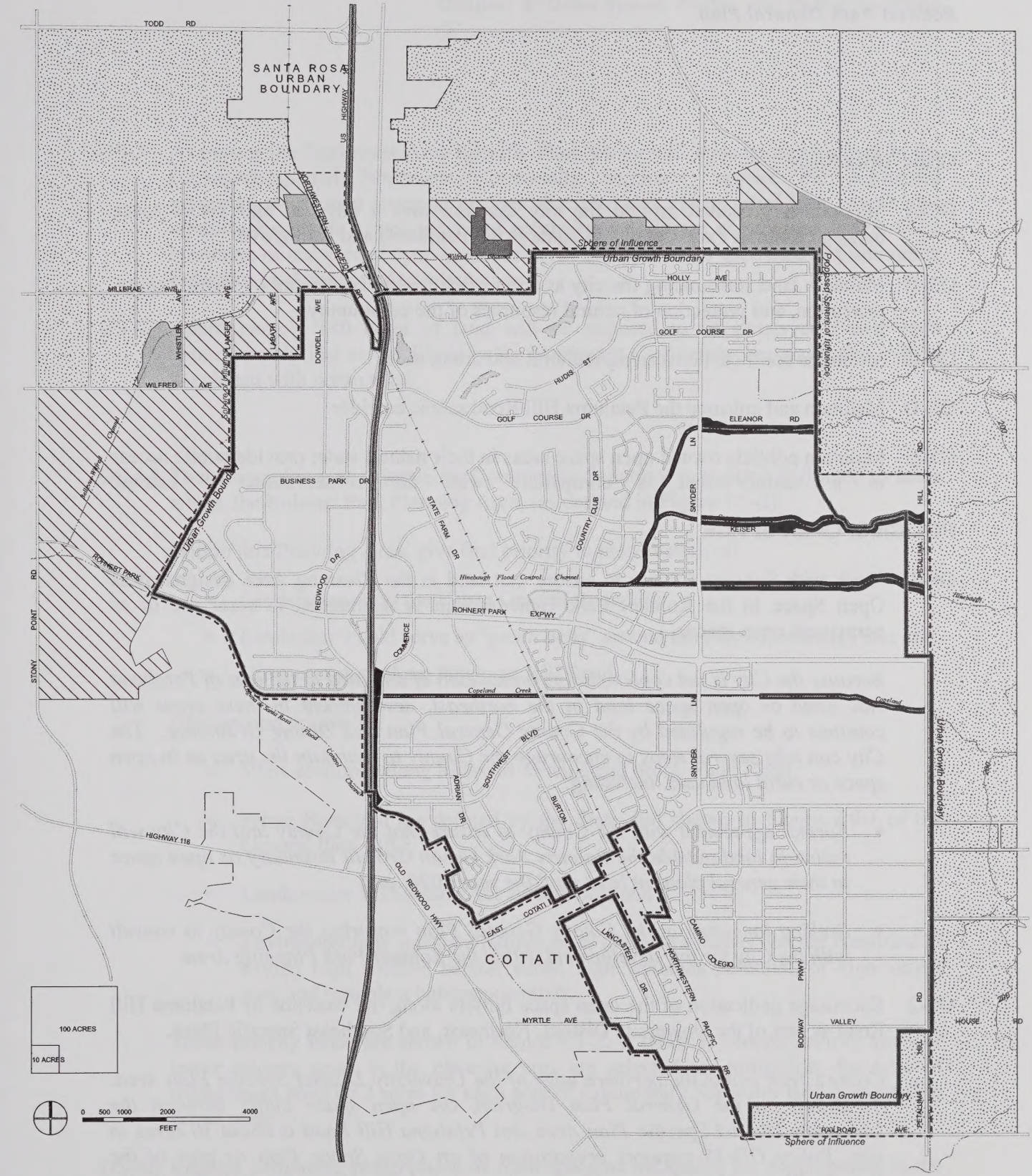
URBAN OPEN SPACE

Street Rights-of-Way

Extensive landscaping within urban open space areas along street rights-of-way is one of Rohnert Park's unique features. The redwood trees planted along the median of the Rohnert Park Expressway, median treatments along other streets such as Snyder Lane, the landscaped buffer area between US 101 and Commerce Boulevard are examples of open space along streets. Approximately 26 acres of such open space are found within the City limits.

Business Campuses

Several office, commercial and industrial sites in the city contain substantial landscaped areas. While these are privately owned, they serve as visual resources for the community. Two parcels retain significant amounts of urban open space. The State Farm site has about five acres of open space, and the Hewlett Packard campus has about 21 acres of open space, which includes recreational facilities for employees.



- Open Space/Agriculture and Resource Management
- Open Space-Environmental Conservation
- SCAPOSD Conservation Easement
- SCAPOSD Fee
- County Community Separator (outside proposed Urban Growth Boundary)

Figure 5.1-1

Open Space

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Goals: Open Space

OS-A Maintain a greenbelt around the city that provides a physical and visual space between Rohnert Park-Cotati and Santa Rosa, Petaluma, and Penngrove.

OS-B Maintain land surrounding the city as open space for the enjoyment of scenic beauty, recreation, and protection of natural resources of the community.

OS-C Minimize conflicts between agricultural and urban uses.

OS-D Maintain and enhance the Petaluma Hill Road scenic corridor.

OS-E Maintain publicly owned open space areas in their natural state; provide public access in a manner that is compatible with the conservation of habitat.

POLICIES: OPEN SPACE

OS-1 Work with Sonoma County to ensure that land in the Planning Area designated as Open Space in the Rohnert Park General Plan is maintained in rural use or as permanent open space.

Because the City is not contemplating annexation of any land to the east of Petaluma Hill Road or open space land in the northeast, development in these areas will continue to be regulated by the County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The City can take several steps to encourage the County to maintain the area ~~as~~ in open space or rural land uses, including:

- *Formal agreement with the County to ensure that the County and the City will maintain land outside the Rohnert Park Urban Growth Boundary as open space in their general plans at least until the year 2020; and*

- *Seeking language in the County General Plan requiring the County to consult with the City for any development within the Rohnert Park Planning Area.*

OS-2 Encourage dedication of the open space buffers along the westside of Petaluma Hill Road as part of the University District, Northeast, and Southeast Specific Plans.

Crane Creek marks the northern edge of the University District Specific Plan Area. As shown on the General Plan Diagram, the open space buffer between the University District Specific Plan Area and Petaluma Hill Road is about 30 acres in size. Policy CD-36 requires preparation of an Open Space Plan as part of the Specific Plan and a minimum 30-acre open space buffer. Open Space buffers in the Northeast Specific Plan area would include the proposed Community Fields. A buffer about 100 acres in size is located along Petaluma Hill Road in the Southeast Specific Plan area.

OS-3 As part of the Northwest Area Specific Plan, which will include development in the County-designated Northwest Community Separator, require the permanent preservation of open space in an area that provides visual relief from continuous urbanization and is a special type of scenic border. Except as provided in OS-4A, a minimum of one acre of open space land will be required for each acre of Community Separator land converted to urban uses.

OS-4 Approximately 180 acres of land will be required to be preserved based upon approximately 180 acres of land in the Northwest Community Separator that will be developed with urban uses.

OS-4A The geographic area suitable for Community Separator mitigation is limited to lands within the Rohnert Park Planning Area, (as defined in Figure 1.5-2).

Within this Planning Area, give first priority to preservation of:

- Lands adjacent to the Urban Growth Boundary;
- Lands that would serve as "green belts" around the City of Rohnert Park; and
- View corridors along Petaluma Hill Road.

Give second priority to:

- View corridors along Railroad Avenue and Stony Point Road;
- Prime Farmland (as defined by the State and shown in Figure 4.9-1 of the General Plan EIR);
- Lands under Williamson Act agreements; and
- Environmentally sensitive habitat areas (defined as areas that are classified as having high wildlife habitat value, high wetlands potential, or high vernal pool and rare plant habitat potential).

These priority lands are shown in Figure 5.1-2. If lands in second priority areas or lower priority areas in the planning area are selected for mitigation, the ratio of replacement shall be 2 acres for each acre of Community Separator land converted to urban uses.

OS-4B Require permanent preservation of open space as mitigation for development in the Northwest Community Separator as a condition of development included within the Northwest Specific Plan. Prior to annexation approval, require applicants to demonstrate the ability to ensure the permanent preservation of open space land.

OS-4C Ensure that permanent preservation of open space takes the form of grants in fee title or easement to the appropriate governmental body (other than the City of Rohnert Park) or third party land trust, and that provision is made for the maintenance of the open space.

OS-4D The City shall adopt an adequate and appropriate mechanism to ensure that the required open space mitigation will occur through acquisition of open space land within the areas described in OS-4A or payment of a fee in lieu of acquisition. Payment of an in lieu fee will be permitted in the event that the Council finds that unique circumstances warrant payment of a fee rather than provision of land and that payment of a fee is consistent with implementation of this policy. Whether the land is acquired by the developer or through fees paid to the City by the developer, the acquisition of the open space land must be in place prior to City issuance of any grading or building permits .

OS-5 Ensure that open space parcels are aggregated to the maximum extent feasible, in order to avoid piecemeal acquisition that would not serve to mitigate the loss of Community Separator lands. However, acquisition of individual open space parcels may occur, consistent with the County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District's acquisition plan.

The City's commitment to the preservation of open space is more than a written statement of public policy. The City believes that the effective preservation of open space is best approached on a regional, multi-agency level. To that end, the City supports exploring cooperative methods such as a joint powers agreement between the City of Rohnert Park, Sonoma County, the Sonoma County Open Space District, and other interested agencies. Such an agreement would provide for the identification, acquisition, maintenance, and preservation of open space.

As part of preparation of the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (see Section 5.2), the City should identify open space priorities and work with the district for their inclusion in the district's acquisition plan.

OS-6 Require property developers adjacent to sites where agricultural use is permitted or being conducted to inform subsequent buyers of potential continued agricultural production and the lawful use of agricultural chemicals, including pesticides and fertilizers.

OS-7 Use creek protection zones (see Section 6.2) for permanent public open space and compatible purposes including habitat conservation, bike and walking paths, wildlife habitat, and native plant landscaping.

Creeks are located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, providing accessible open space getaways for residents. Adverse impacts to ecologically

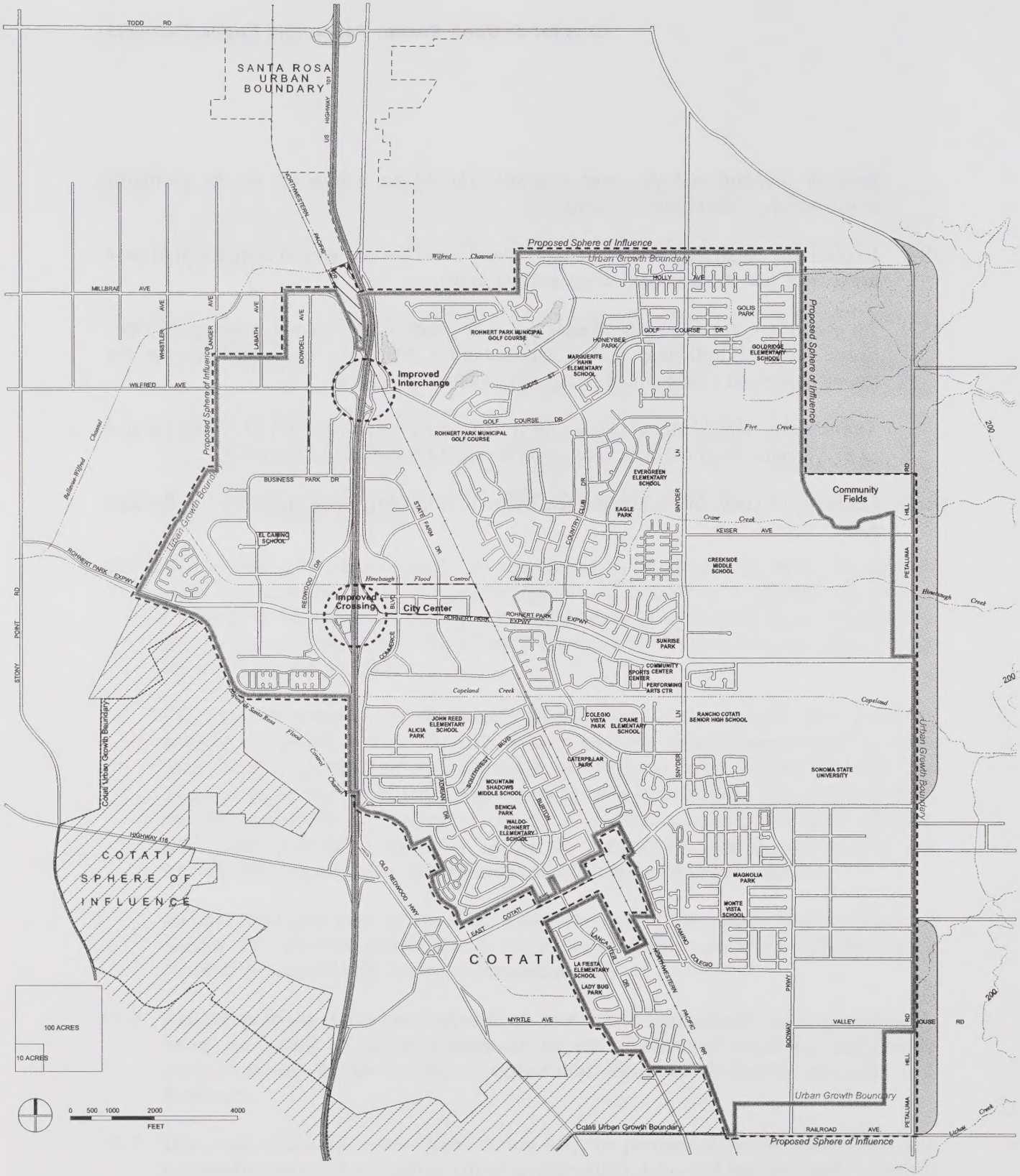
sensitive habitat, wildlife, and wetlands should be minimized in the planning, construction, and maintenance of paths.

OS-8 Explore the feasibility of integrating natural and restored wetlands and vernal pool areas with new development or open space areas.

OS-9 As part of the specific plan process, institute mechanisms for maintenance of Open Space west of Petaluma Hill Road. Establish standards and schedules for the maintenance and management of any City-owned open space.

Maintenance should include measures to cut back grass and brush to reduce the risk of fire, reduce flood hazards, and perform related maintenance activities.

OS-9A Undertake a study to explore the feasibility of mitigating open space loss on the East Side.



Open Space Priority Acquisition Areas

Note: Refer to EIR Figure 4.7-3 for a map of Special Staus Species Habitat

Figure 5.1-2

Open Space First Priority Acquisition Areas

5.2 PARKS

CITY PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

As of 1999, Rohnert Park contained 469 acres of park and recreation land, or approximately 11 percent of the total net city area. This amounts to 17.8 acres per 1,000 existing residents. Even after excluding school-parks, creek-side open space and other open spaces along streets, the City's parkland availability still equals 11.8 acres per 1,000 residents. A large portion—310 acres—of this area is contained in the two municipal golf courses – the North Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course covers 166 acres and the South Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course covers 144 acres.

Key park and recreational facilities include:

- *Community Center Complex*. Located near the intersection of the Rohnert Park Expressway and Snyder Lane, this complex includes:
    - 20,000 square foot Community Center Building;
    - 33,000 square foot Sports Center;
    - 37,000 square foot Performing Arts Facility, including a 500-seat main stage and 100-seat second stage; and
    - Planned Indoor Pool.
- *Rohnert Park Stadium*. The home of the Crushers Baseball Team, the stadium was built in 1981 at 5900 Labath Avenue.
- *Roberts Lake*. Located at 5010 Roberts Lake Road, this five-acre artificial lake has adjacent recreational facilities.
- *Scout Hut*. This 1,328 square foot facility is located at 295 Santa Alicia Drive.
- *Parks*. The City has the following major parks:
    - Alicia Park (includes outdoor pool);
    - Benecia Park (includes outdoor pool);
    - Caterpillar Park;
    - Collegio Vista Park;
    - Dorothea Park;
    - Eagle Park;
    - Golis Park;
    - Honeybee Park (includes outdoor pool);
    - Ladybug Park (includes outdoor pool);
    - Magnolia Park (outdoor pool to be constructed in 2000);

  - Hinebaugh Creek Park;
  - Rainbow Park;
  - San Simeon Park; and
  - Sunrise Park.
- *Senior Citizen Center*. The center is currently 10,000 square feet.
- *Neighborhood Recreation Centers*. These include:
  - Benecia Park Recreation Center, 3,024 square foot, at 7450 Santa Barbara Drive;
  - Burton Avenue Recreation Center, 6,700 square foot, at 7421 Burton Avenue; and
  - Ladybug Park Recreation Center, 1,145 square foot at 8517 Liman Way.
- *Pools*. Community pools are located in neighborhood parks and are listed above under "Parks."

Table 5.2-1:
Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Open Space Acreage, Inside 1999 City Limits

	Acres	*Total Per 1,000 residents*[4]
Neighborhood Parks and Mini-parks[1]	116	2.9
Golf Courses	310	7.8
Other Recreational Facilities	43	1.1
Creekside Open Space	96	2.4
Open Space along Street Rights-of-Way[2]	26	0.7
Schools[3]	126	3.2
Total	712	17.8

1. Includes underwater area of Roberts Lake, which is 5 acres in size.

2. Along Rohnert Park Expressway and between US 101 and Commerce Boulevard.

3. Includes 35-acre Creekside Middle School. Total school acreage is 180. Assuming 30 percent of school sites are covered with structures, the remaining areas are recreational and open space, totaling 126 acres. However, the School District does not allow scheduled public use of the field facilities at Creekside Middle School, as they do at other facilities, as a mitigation measure from the EIR for the project. Monte Vista School, by virtue of fencing and locked gates. Is also not available for community use of the playground after school hours.

4. Based on 1999 DOF population of 40,032 residents.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

Five new neighborhood and linear parks are proposed in the General Plan. These parks are located in areas where new residential development is proposed. The total amount of proposed parkland ranges from 33-41, as shown in Table 5.2-2. Existing and proposed parks are shown in Figure 5.2-1.

Table 5.2-2:
New Parks Under the General Plan[1]

	Acres
University District Linear Park[2]	12-15
South Eastside Park	5-8
North Eastside Park	8
North Eastside Linear Park[2]	4
Community Fields	27-50
Westside Park	2-4
Infill Park	2
Total	60-91

1. Excluding mini-parks, plazas, and greenways.
2. Although geographically linear, these would be neighborhood parks.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

STANDARDS AND CLASSIFICATION

Standards

Residential Development

Although there are no State standards for parks, the Quimby Act (Government Code §66477) allows local agencies to require dedication standards—at up to three acres per 1,000 residents, or a higher amount matching existing availability, up to up to five acres/1,000 residents—for residential subdivisions to provide land or in-lieu fees for developing new or rehabilitating existing neighborhood or community park or recreational facilities to serve the subdivision.

Non-residential Development

In addition to parkland need that stems from residential development, employment-generating uses also have recreation and open space needs. In business park kind of developments, open space on the site often suffices for lunchtime open space needs. However, in more urban settings, plazas and mini-parks may be necessary. Thus, in addition to the residential parkland standards, the City may require plazas, mini-parks, and other appropriate open spaces from non-residential developments in locations such as the University District, subject to a maximum of one acre per 250,000 square feet of non-residential space.

Classification

Community and neighborhood parks are defined as follows:

- *Community Parks.* Community parks serve a citywide population and usually include sports facilities, such as lighted fields, courts, swimming pools, recreation buildings, and other special use facilities. Restrooms and off-street parking are generally provided. Although community parks have a much larger service area than neighborhood parks, they often serve a neighborhood function as well.
- *Neighborhood Parks.* Neighborhood parks are devoted primarily to serving a small portion of the city, usually within easy walking and biking distance from residences. These parks are designed for unorganized and unsupervised recreation activities. Play equipment, open turf areas, and picnic tables may be provided, although restrooms and off-street parking may not. Neighborhood parks typically measure between three and fifteen acres.

Based on a standard of 5.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, buildout of the General Plan would result in the need for an additional 60 acres of neighborhood and community parkland. This is the amount of parkland that the City could require of developers submitting subdivision maps; the City may provide additional park and recreation facilities independently.

Table 5.2-3:
New Community and Neighborhood Park Need

	Standard (Acres per 1,000 residents)	*Population in New Housing Units*[1]	*Acres Needed*
Community and Neighborhood Parks	5.0	11,700	59

1.Based on the total addition of 4, 450 housing units at buildout and assuming 2.62 persons per household at buildout. This is the total population based on 100% occupancy of housing units, which is the method used to assess in-lieu fee or land requirements under the Quimby Act. Increase in population at buildout is projected to be lower (see Table 2.3-3), since projected household size at buildout is lower than in 2000, and vacancy rates are included in calculating buildout projections.

Note: This table does not include parkland need from non-residential development, which would be in the form of plazas and mini-parks.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

CREEK CHANNELS

The City, in cooperation with the Sonoma County Water Agency, owns and maintains creek channels within Rohnert Park. These channels include Coleman Creek, Copeland Creek, Crane Creek, Five Creek, and the Five Creek Diversion. The Wilfred Channel, located adjacent to the northern City boundary, also is an urban open space resource for the community. The amount of urban open space along creek channels totals approximately 96 acres. Public access to these channels is generally not restricted. The City has constructed pedestrian/bicycle paths along Coleman, Copeland, Crane, Five, and Hinebaugh creeks.

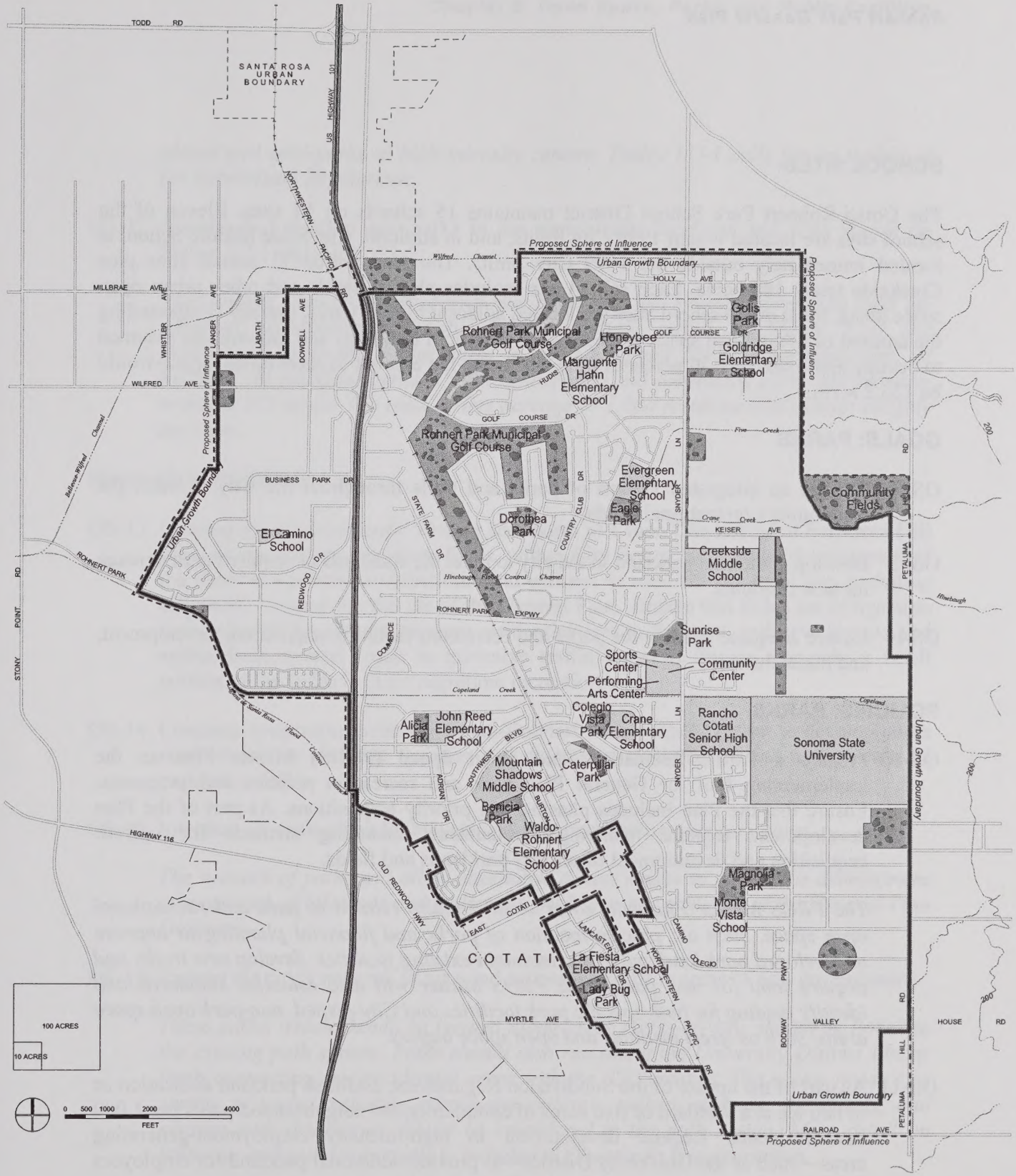


Figure 5.2-1

Parks and Schools

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

SCHOOL SITES

The Cotati-Rohnert Park School District maintains 15 schools on 14 sites. Eleven of the school sites are located within 1999 City limits, and in addition, Creekside Middle School is located immediately outside the 1999 City limits. The land within 11 school sites plus Creekside totals 180 acres. Each school site includes playing fields and other urban open space areas. Most of the school sites are located adjacent to City parks, thereby compounding the amount of urban open space at each locale. If school buildings and grounds are assumed to occupy approximately 30 percent of the site areas, the amount of recreational space would be 126.2 acres.

GOALS: PARKS

OS-F Provide an integrated system of parks and trails throughout the City to meet the community's recreational needs.

OS-G Develop additional parkland in the city to meet the standards of required park acreage for new residents.

OS-H Ensure adequate funding for parks and recreation facilities acquisition, development, and maintenance.

POLICIES: PARKS

OS-10 Prepare a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan as the implementing tool for General Plan park and recreation policies and proposals. Ensure that the Plan includes phasing and priority acquisitions. As part of the Plan development, explore financing mechanisms, including methods for upfront acquisition and development of priority parklands and fields.

The PROS Master Plan will cover several topics related to park and recreational open space, such as: precise location of parks and financial planning to improve undeveloped park land and trails, maintain existing facilities, develop new trails, and acquire land for new parks. The PROS Master will also establish standards and identify funding for both specific park facilities and City-owned, non-park open space areas, such as street medians and open space buffers.

OS-11 As part of the update of the Subdivision Regulations, establish parkland dedication or in lieu fee at a standard of five acres of community and neighborhood parks per 1,000 new residents. Require development in high-intensity employment-generating areas—such as the University District—to provide additional parkland for employees at 1 acre per 250,000 square feet of non-residential development.

The standards set out in this policy will generate a need for approximately 60 acres of new neighborhood and community parkland, as shown in Table 5.2-3, as well as

plazas and mini-parks in high-intensity centers. Policy LU-1 calls for an update of the Subdivision Regulations.

OS-12 Acquire and develop new parks in the approximate locations and sizes shown on Figure 5.2-1 and Table 5.2-2.

The General Plan proposes several new parks that will provide acreage to meet the standard, as indicated in Table 5.2-2. Locations shown on Figure 5.2-1 are generalized, with precise locations to be determined during implementation. At buildout, the parkland acreage for neighborhood and community parks will increase to about 175 acres. The ratio of this acreage to 1,000 residents will remain roughly the same.

Recreation Facilities

OS-13 Develop the approximately 50-acre area north of Crane Creek west of Petaluma Hill Road as community recreation fields. within City limits. Ensure that development of the fields is a priority and that this land will not be used for any other use, including affordable housing, for the life of the General Plan. Ensure that fields are designed to have minimal impacts on adjacent residential uses to the west, and have ingress and egress from several roads to minimize traffic impacts. Ensure that only a small portion of the fields is lit for nighttime recreation.

OS-14 Continue cooperating with the Cotati-Rohnert Park School District to develop parks near schools as joint use facilities and coordinate maintenance and management of park/school sites.

OS-15 Integrate citywide plans for bicycle and pedestrian paths with park plans.

The network of paths will allow alternative access routes to parks. The development of a network of bikeways and pedestrian trails is a key principle of the General Plan Diagram.

OS-16 Expand the city's network of bike and pedestrian paths in areas of new development.

These paths, which should be located along creek rights-of-way, should be linked to the existing path system. Paths should also run along the University District Linear Park, connecting new residential areas with the SSU campus. The access needs of a variety of users, including school-age children, college students, the elderly, and persons with disabilities should be considered in the path design. More detail on bikeways and pedestrian trails is included in Chapter 4: Transportation.

OS-17 Ensure that parks and recreation facilities are safe secure areas.

The City should request Department of Public Safety review and comment on park and recreation facility projects. The design and construction of these facilities should allow for safety, security, and reliable patrol and response.

5.3 SCHOOLS

FACILITIES, 1999

Rohnert Park schools are under the authority of the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD). The District operates 15 schools, including nine elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school, and two continuation high schools. There are 14 school sites in all, with a combined elementary and middle school program at the Thomas Page School, and eleven sites are found inside Rohnert Park's 1999 City limits. The CRPUSD also runs an alternative secondary program. School sites are shown on Figure 5.2-1.

As in many cities, the District and the City work closely to provide complementary services. The City maintains turf areas and playing fields on school grounds as part of regular park maintenance, and the District reimburses the City for the service. School buildings and recreational facilities are available for community use during non-school hours[1]. Parks located adjacent to schools provide additional outdoor recreational space for students.

The boundaries of the CRPUSD are shown on Figure 5.3-1. The Bellevue Union School District (BUSD) and Santa Rosa High School District (SRHSD) are located on the north side of the CRPUSD. As of 1999, the boundaries of the BUSD-SRHSD include areas planned for new development under this General Plan on both the eastside and the westside.

ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITY, 1999

In 1999, approximately 8,120 students were enrolled in the CRPUSD. This number is reduced to 7,970, if Independent Study students are subtracted out.[2] The CRPUSD had excess capacity (7,970 students enrolled, vs. 9,110 capacity). Moreover, all school levels—elementary, middle, and high school—had some excess capacity (see Table 5.3-1).

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT

Buildout of the General Plan will result in the addition of approximately 4,450 housing units, with a total buildout population of approximately 54,000. According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Cotati is projected to have a population of 9,400 by 2020.

Based on General Plan buildout population, Cotati's 2020 population projection, ABAG age-class projections, and Sonoma County grade-level enrollment projections, decreased enrollment is expected among elementary school students; middle school enrollment is

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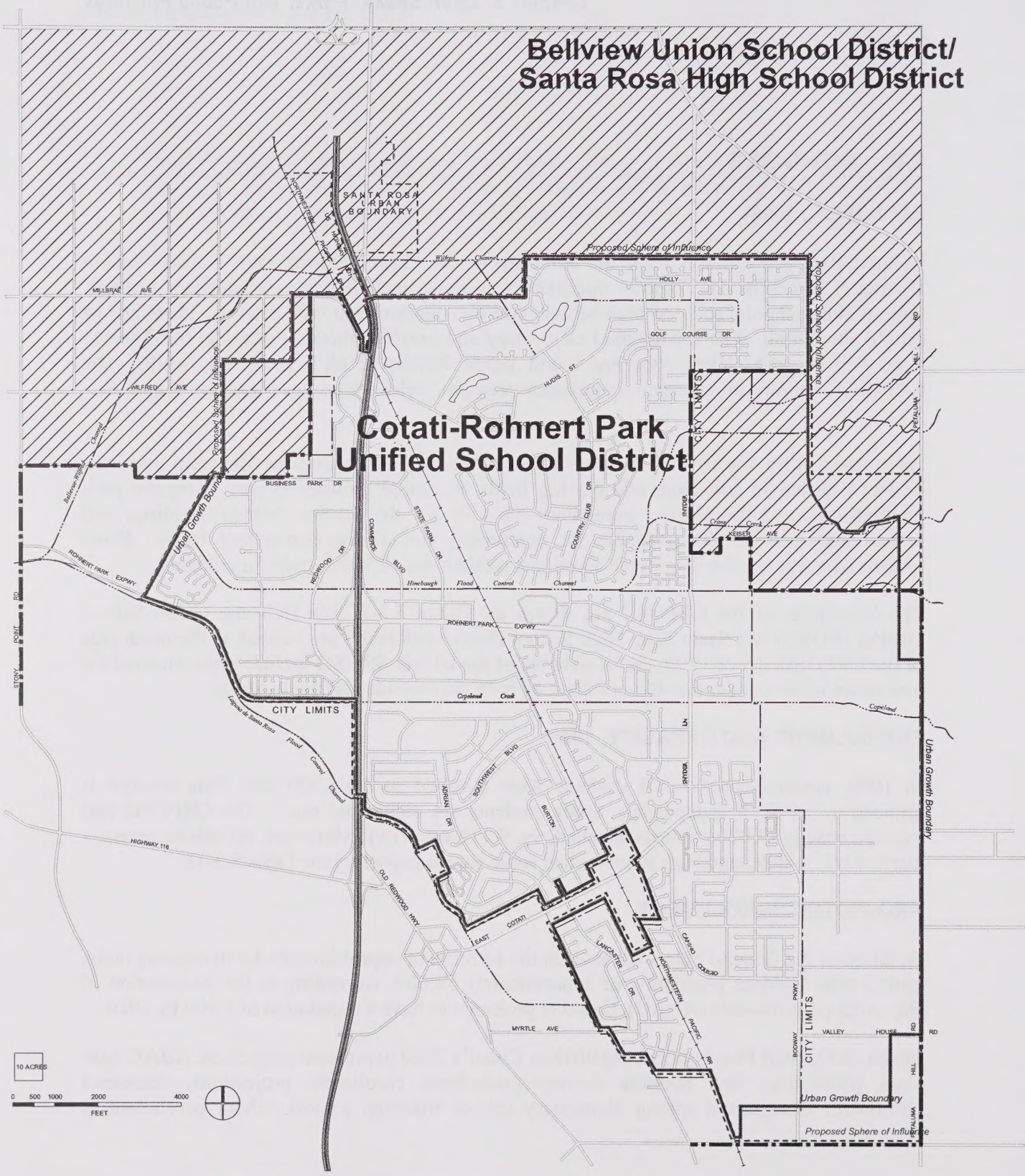
[1] Creekside Middle School is not available for scheduled use of its athletic fields as a mitigation measure of the project EIR. Monte Vista School, by virtue of fencing and locked gates, is not available for community use of the playgrounds after school hours.

[2] Independent Study students are students involved in home-study, work-study, or other alternative educational programs. Independent Study students spend most of their class time outside the classroom.



School District Boundary

Figure 5.3-1

School Districts

expected to remain about the same as in 1999; and increased enrollment is expected among high school students. Enrollment estimates under General Plan buildout are shown in Table 5.3-1. Enrollment is estimated under two scenarios: with existing CRPUSD boundary and with an enlarged CRPUSD boundary that includes all areas of new development under the General Plan.

Table 5.3-1:
Estimated Enrollment and Projected School Needs [1]: Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (With Existing CRPUSD Boundary / With Expanded CRPUSD Boundary [2])

	Enrollment 1999[3]	*Buildout Enrollment*	*Change 1999 – Buildout*	*1999 Capacity[4]*	*Capacity Needs at Enrollment[5]*
K-5	3,908	3,289 / 3.604	-619 / -304	4,815	-1,526 / -1,211
6-8	2,067	1,930 / 2,114	-137 / 47	2,154	-224 / -40
9-12	1,992	2,514 / 2,754	522 / 762	2,142	372 / 612
Total	7,967	7,733 / 8,472	-234 / 505	9,111	1,378 / -639

1. Includes estimated enrollment for the City of Catati, based on 2020 population in ABAG's Projections '98.
2. With existing CRPUSD boundaries, some Rohnert Park school-age children would attend school in the Bellevue Union and Santa Rosa High School Districts. An expanded boundary change considers the scenario of school enrollment in the CRPUSD if the school district boundaries were redrawn to include all development under the Rohnert Park General Plan.
3. Excludes Independent Study students.
4. Excludes the two classrooms used for Independent Study students.
5. A negative number means that capacity exceeds enrollment, which means that there would be extra classroom space.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

CRPUSD estimates in the *1997 School Facility Analysis and Justification Report for School Facility Fees* are projected only until the 2010-2011 school year. Enrollment projections in that report are based on constant rates of students per household,[3] while current ABAG Projections '98 expect a decrease in household size and children per household.

Projected School Needs

As shown in Table 5.3-1, the estimated decrease in elementary school enrollment, combined with existing excess capacity in 1999, would generate an excess capacity of about 1,200 under General Plan buildout if the school district boundary is changed. The average capacity of the CRPUSD's nine elementary schools is 550, suggesting than two or three elementary schools could potentially be closed as a result of decreased enrollment. In addition, the elementary school site reserved by CRPUSD on the eastside adjacent to the Creekside

3 The report expresses the rates on a "per home" basis, not specifying whether the unit of measure is "housing unit" or "household." Because the report states that "housing vacancy rates are assumed to remain constant and do not affect [the rates]," households—defined as occupied housing units—are implied.

Middle School may no longer be needed. The drop in enrollment is primarily the result of projected decreases in household school-age children per household, which would counteract the increased number of housing units and households in Cotati and Rohnert Park.

Because middle school enrollment is expected to increase only very slightly at buildout with a boundary change, assuming 27 students per classroom (the State rate), capacity and enrollment are likely to be in balance. The estimated increase in high school students is expected to exceed 1999 capacity at the Rancho Cotate and extension high schools. Additional space would be necessary. This would be true regardless of whether the school district boundary is changed or not.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARY CHANGES

The City does not control school boundaries. However, however, the City can encourage actions that will promote a cohesive community. Procedures for reorganizing the boundaries of a school district are described in § 35700 of the California Education Code. There are two alternative procedures for changing the school district boundaries:

- *Negotiated Agreement.* The CRPUSD and each of the other two districts would mutually agree that they would be reorganized "on the basis of a substantial community identity" and that the reorganization would not cause a "substantial negative effect on the fiscal management or fiscal status of...any existing district affected by the proposed reorganization." The three districts would file a petition with the County Superintendent of Schools asking for a reorganization action. A "county committee" comprised of two representatives from each of the supervisorial districts and one at-large member would vote on the petition. Its recommendation would be sent to the State Board of Education for action, which is likely to approve the transfer if two or all three districts support it.
- *Petition.* Petition for reorganization by 25 percent or more of registered voters within the transfer territory in each of the BUSD and SRHSD districts. This alternative could be pursued if agreement could not be reached among the three districts and would be initiated by one or more of the property owners. If the county committee grants the petition but one or more of the districts opposes it, an election would be called in the territory of the districts to vote on the reorganization. The vote would occur at the next available regular election.

GOALS: SCHOOLS

PF-A Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to ensure that all school-age children living in Rohnert Park can attend public schools in Rohnert Park, without having to travel to adjacent jurisdictions.

PF-B Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD), with the Bellevue Union School District (BUSD), and the Santa Rosa High School District (SRHSD), to ensure availability of adequate sites for schools.

PF-C Work with Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to find alternative uses for facilities that are closed or sites and facilities that may not be needed in the future because of decreased enrollment.

POLICIES: SCHOOLS

PF-1 Work actively with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to amend school district boundaries, so that all new development under this General Plan is included in the CRPUSD. Encourage CRPUSD, the Bellevue Union School District (BUSD), and the Santa Rosa High School District (SRHSD) to reach a negotiated agreement on the boundary changes.

PF-2 Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to provide adequate high school sites and facilities.

If students from new development in the Rohnert Park Planning Area, including those areas within the BUSD and SRHSD as of 1999, were to enroll at the Rancho Cotate High School, demand at buildout is likely to exceed 1999 capacity, creating the need for additional facilities. The City should encourage CRPUSD to undertake a comprehensive assessment of facility needs and work with the district to accommodate the districts needs. Options to the district include, but are not limited to:

- *Expansion of Rancho Cotate High School, or use of temporary classrooms at the high school;*
- *Construction of a second high school. As of 1999, capacity at Rancho Cotate High School was approximately 2,100. Buildings, parking lots, and playing fields already occupy the most of the site, limiting the potential for expansion. Construction of a smaller 500-student high school can be considered;*
- *Retrofit and reuse of an elementary school. According to projected enrollment levels, two to three elementary schools can potentially be closed by 2020, while additional space will be needed for high school students. Reuse of an elementary school site could be a considered as an alternative to building new high school classrooms.*
- *This option raises issues of displacement of elementary school students from their home neighborhoods, proximity of the "satellite" high school to the Rancho Cotate High School, compatibility with residential neighborhoods, and the feasibility and cost of retrofitting an elementary school to high school needs. The only elementary school within walking distance of Rancho Cotate High School is Crane Elementary School, which is approximately a 1/4-mile or 5-minute walk away.*

PF-3 Require developers to dedicate any necessary school sites to the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD).

At the time Specific Plans are developed, an analysis of the need for additional school sites shall be conducted in consultation with the appropriate school district.

PF-4 Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to ensure that CRPUSD land that is part of the Creekside Middle School site and is not needed for school facilities is developed in accordance with the General Plan Diagram.

PF-5 Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to reuse any closed elementary school sites, and ensure that new uses are compatible with adjacent uses.

Reuse of elementary school sites should be consistent with surrounding uses. In case CRPUSD determines that one or more of the sites is no longer needed, appropriate alternatives should be considered for each closed site. The Naylor Act allows cities and counties to acquire surplus school properties for recreational purposes, so recreational reuse is a possibility. Reuse could include a community service center, occupied by a group of non-profit organizations, and managed by the City or a lessee. The lessee could be a non-profit organization that also occupies the facility.

PF-6 In case CRPUSD determines that the vacant elementary school site on the eastside adjacent to Creekside Middle School is no longer needed for school use, encourage its development with Medium Density Residential use.

The appropriateness of developing this site for an elementary school, in view of the projected declining enrollment, will need to be determined by CRPUSD. If CRPUSD determines that the site is not needed for an elementary school, Medium Density Residential would be a use compatible with the surrounding land use designations, according to the General Plan Diagram. The CRPUSD can consider and decide on the appropriate mechanism (sale, lease, or other) for realizing residential use of the site.

5.4 WASTEWATER

SEWER SERVICE, 1999

All development within the 1999 City limits was connected to sewer service as of 1999. The City also provides sewer service to the Sonoma State University (SSU) campus, located east of the 1999 City limits. Residential development in Canon Manor, located outside the 1999 City limits but within its SOI, is served by septic systems, not City sewers. Sewer mains collect wastewater and transport it to the Rohnert Park Pumping Station. As of 1999, the wastewater mains were adequate in size to serve the area within the 1999 City limits. A 24-inch interceptor sewer main extends westward from the pumping station to the treatment plant.

SUBREGIONAL WASTEWATER DISPOSAL SYSTEM

Rohnert Park is a partner in the subregional wastewater disposal system, which also serves Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, and Cotati. The City of Santa Rosa is the managing partner and has a contractual obligation to meet the wastewater treatment and disposal needs of the other partners. Wastewater from the subregional system is treated at the Laguna Water Reclamation Treatment Plant (LWRTP), located about two miles northwest of Rohnert Park.

The LWRTP provides primary, secondary, and tertiary treatment. Agricultural and urban irrigation is the primary method used to dispose of tertiary wastewater, and river discharge is used only as necessary during wet weather. After treatment, tertiary water is stored in containment ponds. Water levels in the ponds are monitored, and when they reach maximum capacity, water is discharged into the Russian River, which empties into the Pacific Ocean. Based on the City of Santa Rosa's NPDES permit for the treatment plan, discharged water cannot exceed 5 percent of the river flow.

The City of Rohnert Park is currently allotted a capacity of 3.22 million gallons per day (mgd) in the subregional system, including 0.10 for SSU. Estimated 1999 wastewater flows are shown in Table 5.4-1. The City of Cotati funnels wastewater through the Rohnert Park system, but has been developing its own connection to the LWRTP and will no longer direct wastewater through Rohnert Park as of fall 1999. Cotati has an allocation of 0.62 mgd.

Table 5.4-1:
Wastewater Treatment Flows, 1999[1]

Average Dry Weather Flow (mgd)	3.50
Average Annual Flow (mgd)	4.09

1. Includes flows from Rohnert Park, SSU, and Cotati.

Source: City of Rohnert Park

Geysers Recharge Project

In the early 1990s, the City of Santa Rosa initiated the Subregional Long Term Wastewater Project to bring the subregional system into compliance with the needs of partner cities through 2010. The wastewater project included expansion of treatment capacity at the LWRTP from 18 to 21.2 mgd and an increase in reclaimed water storage and distribution capacity.

Several alternatives were considered for the wastewater project, including a reclaimed water reservoir south of Rohnert Park. The Geysers Recharge alternative was selected in February 1997 as the preferred alternative. This project will enable the Laguna Water Reclamation Treatment Plan to treat the higher capacity of wastewater, because the Plant is constrained by the amount of available online storage, rather than by the amount of water it can physically treat. The City of Santa Rosa has opened bids on the first phase of the construction project, and the pipeline is projected to become operational by 2002[4].

The City of Santa Rosa has a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to release treated wastewater from the treatment plant. On March 1, 2000, the State Board approved an incremental capacity increase for the Subregional System, increasing the permitted amount of released water from 18 mgd to 19.2 mgd. The allocation of this increased capacity has yet to be negotiated. On March 15, 2000, the State Board approved an additional capacity increase for the Subregional System to 21.2 mgd, pending completion of the Geysers Recharge project.

Storage Pond Expansion

Because the Geysers Recharge project was developed over many years, starting in the early 1990s, the City of Santa Rosa initiated and has now completed an interim project to meet wastewater needs throughout the county. Online pond storage is the major constraint on wastewater treatment capacity, because no wastewater can be directly discharged into the Russian River. A storage pond has been completed northwest of Rohnert Park, and the State Board has approved an incremental capacity increase for the Subregional System, as described in the previous section.

TREATMENT CAPACITY NEEDS

In 1999, average dry weather wastewater flow from Rohnert Park, SSU, and Cotati was 3.50 mgd. In 1998 however, Rohnert Park, SSU, and Cotati exceeded their combined 1999 allocation capacity of 3.84 mgd with an average dry weather wastewater flow of 3.93 mgd, although Cotati was actually under capacity. Rohnert Park uses the excess capacity of other subregional system partners, and pays its proportionate share of operation and maintenance

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[4] Email correspondence with Joe Gaffney, City Engineer, City of Rohnert Park, April 12, 2000.

[5] Email correspondence with Scott Stinebaugh, Deputy Director, Utilities Department of the City of Santa Rosa, April 26, 2000.

costs based on its actual flow, not on its allocation. Rohnert Park is the only subregional partner over its allocation.

For the purpose of the wastewater project, the wastewater needs of partner cities were based on adopted General Plans that were current when the wastewater project was being planned. Buildout of the 1995 Rohnert Park General Plan warranted an increase in capacity from 3.22 to 3.81 mgd for Rohnert Park and SSU (or from 3.84 to 4.65 mgd, including Cotati). As shown in Table 5.4-2, additional capacity is needed to accommodate buildout of this General Plan. This finding implies that another wastewater capacity expansion project will be required to meet Rohnert Park's needs, after the Geysers Recharge project.

Table 5.4-2:
Estimated Wastewater Flows in Rohnert Park, Under General Plan Buildout

	Average Daily Dry Weather Flows (mgd) [1]
Rohnert Park	4.83
Sonoma State University	0.321[2]
Total	5.151
Capacity Allocation with Geysers Recharge	3.81[3]
Storage Pond Capacity Allocation	0.50[4]
Additional Capacity Need	0.841 + contingencies

1. Based on City of Santa Rosa wastewater generation rates: 192.8 gallons/day/ dwelling; 30.8 gallons/day/employee; 19.8 gallons/day/student.
2. Based on Master Plan buildout of 10,000 FTE students.
3. Expected to be on line in 2002.
4. Pending State Board approval.

Sources: Dyett & Bhatia; City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Subregional Long Term Wastewater Project: Wastewater Flow Projections, July 1996; Sonoma State Universty Master Plan Revision: Draft Environmental Impact Report, November 1999.

Table 5.4-2 provides an estimate of when additional capacity may be needed. Rohnert Park's increased capacity allotment from the Geysers Recharge project would be adequate to accommodate an additional 2,751 dwelling units and about 2.53 million square feet of non-residential development, assuming balanced residential/non-residential use development, sufficient for residential development to about 2012-13.

If Canon Manor hook-ups are not provided, additional capacity will not be needed until 2014-15, and about 3,155 units could be accommodated. A more detailed analysis will need to be prepared in order to determine wastewater needs and timing with greater precision.

Table 5.4-3:
Use of Rohnert Park's Geysers Recharge Capacity Allocation (mgd)

	With Sewer Provision in Canon Manor	*W/out Sewer Provision in Canon Manor*
Capacity Allocation with Geysers Recharge	3.81	
Storage Point Capacity Allocation	0.50	
Total Capacity Allocation	4.31	
1998 Average Dry Weather Flow (July-October)	3.36[1]	
Excess Capacity	0.95	
Less Contingency	0.05	
Less Amount reserved for Pipeline Projects and SSU Expansion	0.12[2]	
Less Canon Manor Sewer Provision	0.10[3]	0.00
Net Capacity Available for New Development	0.68	0.78
Supportable Housing Units[4]	2,751	3,155
Supportable Non-Residential Space (million s.f.)	2.53	2.90
Year when additional capacity is expected to be needed[5]	2012-13	2014-15

1. Dry weather flow for Rohnert Park, SSU and Cotati was 3.93 mgd; Cotati flow of 0.57 mgd is subtracted out. Cotati 1998 flow is estimated using City of Santa Rosa wastewater generation rates: 192.8 gallons/day/ dwelling; 30.8 gallons/day/employee; 19.8 gallons/day/student; 1998 DOF population estimate; and 2000 ABAG employment projection.
2. Includes Wilfred-Dowdell, all non-residential infill development within the 1999 City limits, and 72 infill residential units. 3. Based on General Plan Diagram and City of Santa Rosa wastewater generation rate of 192.8 gallons/day/ dwelling. Under General Plan buildout, the Canon Manor, which is designated for Estate Residential and Low Density Residential uses, would have about 540 housing units at buildout.
4. Assumes residential uses will use up 80 percent of capacity, consistent with projected flows.
5. Assuming 225 units per year.

Sources: Dyett & Bhatia; City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Subregional Long Term Wastewater Project: Wastewater Flow Projections, July 1996; Letter from Linda Spiro to Miles Ferris, August 17, 1997, Attachments A and B.

PUMPING CAPACITY NEEDS

The capacity of Rohnert Park's pumping station is 26 mgd, whereas pumping needs under buildout of the General Plan are expected to be 21.9 mgd.[6] Thus, no additional pumping station capacity is needed.

GOALS: WASTEWATER

PF-D Ensure that adequate wastewater facilities and services are available to meet the needs of existing and new development.

POLICIES: WASTEWATER

PF-7 Continue participation in the planning, financing, and construction of wastewater treatment capacity expansions of the Subregional Wastewater Disposal System. Explore opportunities for increasing reclaimed water use and decreasing potable water demand.

PF-8 Undertake a detailed evaluation of the wastewater capacity needs associated with General Plan buildout. Seek from the City of Santa Rosa an increase in Rohnert Park's wastewater treatment capacity allocation that would become available in time to serve anticipated growth. Re-examine General Plan growth projections and development approval processes if additional capacity does not become available by 2012.

The background analysis in this section provides a preliminary estimate of wastewater needs and indicates that additional treatment capacity may be needed by about 2012-13, if Canon Manor's needs are also included.

PF-9 Require developers to install or pay for new sewer lines and other sewer improvements needed to accommodate new development.

Sewer mains on both the eastside and westside will need to be expanded in order to accommodate new development. Developers shall be required not only to install on-site sewers, but also to contribute to the cost of improvements to sewer mains. Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management includes specific policies for assessing costs and prioritizing and implementing infrastructure improvements.

PF-10 Continue to work with residents in Canon Manor to coordinate the provision and timing of wastewater services and facilities.

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[6] Pumping capacity must be greater than average dry weather flows and must be sufficient to pump peak hour wet weather wastewater flows. Pumping needs are estimated by multiplying total estimated wastewater flows (5.04 mgd) by 1.45 to estimate peak day wet weather flows and by 3.0 to estimate peak hour wet weather flow.

5.5 WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

The City of Rohnert Park currently derives its drinking-water supply from a wellfield consisting of 42 municipal supply wells, 31 of which were active in 1999; and eight active connections to the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) Petaluma Aqueduct, which supplies water from the Russian River. The Sonoma County Water Agency operates and maintains a water transmission system authorized by the Agreement for Water Supply and Construction of Russian River-Cotati Intertie Project. Parties to the Agreement are the Agency and eight public entities, including Rohnert Park. Table 5.5-1 shows the amount of water supplied by each source. The total amount of water pumped from the 31 operational wells in 1999 was approximately 1.5 billion gallons. Agricultural users in the vicinity of Rohnert Park use a combination of private well water and reclaimed water for irrigation. Canon Manor residences use both shared and individual wells as their water supply.

Table 5.5-1:
Rohnert Park Water Sources and Consumption, 1999

	Water Provision (mgd)	*Percent of Total*
Municipal Wells	4.19	61
SCWA Petaluma Aqueduct	2.68	39
Total	6.87	100

Source: City of Rohnert Park

EXISTING SUPPLY

Municipal Wells

Municipal wells are typically 280 to 1,500 feet below ground and tap into an aquifer that lies under the Santa Rosa plain. The aquifer is recharged from the mountains around the Cotati Valley. The majority of the wells pump from water-bearing zones present within the alluvial fan deposits, Glen Ellen Formation, and Wilson Grove Formation located from 200 to 1,200 feet below ground surface (bgs).

No sites within the existing City limits use private wells for drinking-water supply, although many sites outside the City limits do, including Canon Manor and Sonoma State University. The private wells in the Canon Manor area are usually less than 200 feet in depth. Sonoma State University maintains and operates their own municipal well field that consists of three municipal supply wells. In 1999, two wells were operated by SSU which produced a total of approximately 13 million gallons of water for the year (0.04 mgd).

Since at least 1966, it was less expensive for the City to pump groundwater as a source to supplement water-supply requirements, than to purchase water from the SCWA. However, over time, purchasing water from the SCWA became less expensive due to increased energy

costs and capital and operation costs associated with maintaining a wellfield. Also, groundwater pumping has been affected by increasing well maintenance requirements. Hence, since the mid-1990s, the City has used additional SCWA water and relied less on their municipal wellfield; the excess well capacity serves as a back-up system in case of emergency situations or drought conditions. The production rates range from an annual average of approximately 0.8 mgd in 1970 to 4.8 mgd in 1994.

Sonoma County Water Agency

"SCWA provides potable water to more than 500,000 people in Sonoma and Marin counties. Rohnert Park receives SCWA water from the Petaluma Aqueduct. The sources of the aqueduct water ~~is~~ are the Dry Creek and Russian River Watersheds. To facilitate water supply, the SCWA stores water in two reservoirs, Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma. Water from these reservoirs is conveyed as released flows to Dry Creek and the Russian River to diversion facilities located near the community of Forestville. Water is then diverted, treated, and delivered to the SCWA's contractors including Rohnert Park, via the Agency's water transmission system.

In 1999, Rohnert Park's entitlement to SCWA water was 1.0 mgd, but the City was able to purchase additional water beyond its entitlement. In 1998, the City used 2.62 mgd (annual average) of SCWA water;

Rohnert Park was provided additional water from the unused allocation of another SCWA member, the North Marin Water District (NMWD). In 1991, the City of Petaluma entered into an agreement with the NMWD that allows NMWD to take excess water from Petaluma's allocation in exchange for granting the City of Petaluma permission to connect to the NMWD aqueduct. Since then, Rohnert Park has continued to use NMWD's excess allocation.

To continue to provide a safe, economical, and reliable water supply to meet the future needs of SCWA's service area, SCWA proposed the Water Supply and Transmission System Project (WSTSP) in 1998. When fully constructed and operational, the WSTSP will increase the amount of water that can safely be diverted, and increase SCWA's delivery capacity to its service area.

However, due to delays in implementation resulting from litigation and regulatory constraints, all facilities associated with the WSTSP have not been constructed. As a result of SCWA's ongoing Federal Endangered Species Act compliance efforts for listed salmonid species and current litigation on the WSTSP Environmental Impact Report, SCWA estimates their new water facilities will not be constructed for ten years. Consequently, current limitations exist in the Transmission System primarily due to temporary impairment during summertime water production and new development within the service area.

PROJECTED DEMAND AND CAPACITY NEEDS

In 1999, average annual water use in Rohnert Park was 6.87 mgd (Table 5.5-1); an annual average of 4.19 mgd of water was derived from the City of Rohnert Park's municipal well system and an annual average of 2.68 mgd of water was obtained from SCWA water allocations to Rohnert Park (1.0 mgd entitlement) and an unused portion of NMWD's allocation (1.68 mgd). As of 1999/2000, Rohnert Park's population is approximately 41,000. Applying the 1999 average annual water use of 6.9 mgd and a population of 41,000, it is projected that the City's water supply requirement to meet the year 2020 buildout at a population of 50,400 is estimated to be an annual average of 8.5 mgd.

As of 2000, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Regarding Water Transmission System Capacity Allocation During Temporary Impairment has been established between the SCWA and the eight public parties to whom the SCWA provides water supply. The purpose of the MOU is to establish a procedure to optimize allocation of the available supply of SCWA water among the eight public parties during the projected period of temporary impairment of Transmission System capacity. As part of the MOU, a temporary delivery capacity allocation (that remains in effect until September 2010) was developed which includes the schedule presented in Table 5.5-2 for the City of Rohnert Park. The delivery rates are based on historic maximum monthly demand.

Table 5.5-2:
Temporary Delivery Capacity Allocation – Rohnert Park
SCWA Average Day Maximum Month Delivery Rate

Year	*Rates in mgd*
2000	4.8
2001	4.8
2002	4.8
2003	5.2
2004	5.3
2005 – 2010	5.3

Source: Sonoma County Water Agency

On the basis of SCWA's allocation schedule developed for Rohnert Park as presented in Table 5.5-2, and the planned increase for an entitlement of 15 mgd by 2010, the City's reliance on groundwater from their municipal wellfield to meet future demands through the

[7] Total Rohnert Park water consumption divided by the number of residents.

[8] An alternative way to project future water consumption is to use wastewater flow rates, assuming than all water supplied to land uses is ultimately discharged again. For this method, separate rates are used for residential and non-residential uses, as well as students. As discussed in Section 5.4, projected wastewater flows are 5.04 mgd under buildout. The 5.04 mgd water consumption implies a consumption rate of only 100.8 gallons per person per day. At almost 40 percent less than 1998 rates, the rate does not reflect known amounts of consumption.

2020 buildout is summarized below in Table 5.5-3. As indicated, the planned SCWA entitlement of 15.0 mgd by 2010 would fulfill future growth demands from 2010 through 2020, and allow the City to reserve municipal wellfield production for backup and emergency supply purposes. However, during the interim, the City will continue to rely on their municipal wellfield as a source of water to supplement the SCWA allocation schedule. Production requirements from the municipal wellfield are estimated to range from 1.9 mgd in 2004, to 2.3 mgd in 2009.

Groundwater conditions were assessed based on historical data and a groundwater study prepared for the City in May, 2000 entitled City of Rohnert Park Groundwater Study. Conditions indicate that in previous years, production has exceeded recharge. Comparison of the range of estimated annual average recharge rates (0.66 to 3.28 mgd) with the City's municipal wellfield requirements during implementation of the General Plan (1.9 to 2.3 mgd as indicated in Table 5.5-3), indicates the potential for short-term impacts to occur during years of implementation from 2000 through 2009 if annual average recharge is less than 1.9 to 2.3 mgd. Annual average recharge would be less than 1.9 to 2.3 mgd if annual precipitation is less than 36 to 44 inches. The magnitude of the impact, if any, depends on the amount of precipitation in years 2000 through 2009. Policies have been developed to ensure that groundwater levels are not substantially lowered.

Table 5.5-3:
Schedule and Sources for Projected Water Supply Requirements
Average Annual Estimates

	Water Supply Requirement (mgd)	*Allocation from SCWA (mgd)*	*City of Rohnert Park Municipal Wellfield (mgd)*
2000	6.89	4.8	2.09
2001	6.97	4.8	2.17
2002	7.05	4.8	2.25
2003	7.12	5.2	1.92
2004	7.20	5.3	1.90
2005	7.28	5.3	1.98
2006	7.36	5.3	2.06
2007	7.44	5.3	2.14
2008	7.52	5.3	2.22
2009	7.60	5.3	2.30
2010	7.68	15.0	Backup & Emergency Supply
2020	8.47	15.0	Backup & Emergency Supply

Source: City of Rohnert Park Groundwater Study

Although the infrastructure associated with the current water distribution system is adequate to serve areas within the existing City limits, new development extending to the 2020 Urban Growth boundary would necessitate the installation of additional distribution lines to serve the new areas.

WATER CONSERVATION

Use of reclaimed water, discharge reduction programs, and water metering are used to promote water conservation.

Discharge Reduction Programs

Discharge reduction programs are used to limit wastewater discharge, and reuse of reclaimed water, rather than discharge, is the primary method of wastewater disposal. Discharge reduction programs include the use of water-efficient devices and water-efficient use patterns for both residential and non-residential uses. Strategies used by Rohnert Park include:

- Distribution of information and conservation devices;
- Required low flush toilets and low flow showers for new residential development (required by State law);
- Toilet and shower replacement program, which includes give-aways, rebates, and direct installation; and
- Water metering of all new residential uses (although all single-family homes continue to pay a flat rate).

Reclaimed Water

Rohnert Park uses approximately 10 million gallons of reclaimed water per month in summer months and is one of the largest users of reclaimed water in the county. Approximately 270 acres in Rohnert Park and on the SSU campus use reclaimed water, out of 570 "urban" acres countywide.[9] Rohnert Park uses reclaimed water for irrigation of trees and landscaping throughout the city. Sites in Rohnert Park that use reclaimed water include all parks and school grounds south of Golf Course Drive, the North and South Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Courses, Roberts Lake, and various commercial and industrial sites, including Hewlett Packard, State Farm, Press Democrat, Compumotor, and Fresh Choice.

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[9] Letter from Scott Stinebaugh, Deputy Director of Utilities Operations, City of Santa Rosa, Subregional Water Reclamation System, to Joseph Ferrucci, Dyett & Bhatia, July 27, 1999.

Water Metering and Dry-Weather Thresholds

To reduce water consumption, Rohnert Park requires water meters on all new construction. The City's Water Shortage Contingency Plan establishes water supply thresholds that trigger automatic restrictions on water use during dry weather.

GOALS: WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

PF-E Provide sufficient quantities of water for Rohnert Park residents and businesses, while ensuring that safe groundwater yield is not exceeded.

PF-F Utilize purchased water supplies (Table 5.5-2), and reduce reliance on groundwater drawn from municipal wells, except for emergency use.

PF-G Continue to encourage water conservation through use of reclaimed water and reduction of water consumption and discharge, for both existing and new development.

PF-H Ensure that groundwater withdrawal does not exceed safe yield.

POLICIES: WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

Water Supply

PF-11 Based upon the groundwater study prepared for the City in May, 2000 entitled City of Rohnert Park Groundwater Study, monitor the operation of the municipal well field on a monthly basis to ensure that production does not exceed the recharge rates quantified in the study so as to result in a substantial lowering of groundwater levels in the vicinity of the Urban Growth Boundary.

PF-11A Develop a monthly municipal wellfield monitoring program that (i) identifies points of compliance; (ii) establishes the factors to be considered in determining when production which exceeds the recharge rates will result in a substantial lowering of groundwater levels ("thresholds"); and (iii) includes any other information necessary to implement PF 11.

PF-11B In the event that the monthly municipal wellfield monitoring program concludes that a substantial lowering of groundwater levels in the vicinity of the Urban Growth Boundary will occur because development proposed in the area outside the existing City limits as of July 1, 2000 requires production that exceeds the appropriate recharge rates, the City shall either disapprove such development or deny such development connection to the water system until such time that the program concludes that the City is in compliance with the standard established in PF-11.

PF-12 Work with the Sonoma County Water Agency and other water contractors who rely on the Petaluma Aqueduct System to ensure adequate water deliveries for all the contractors' needs.

Purchasing additional SCWA water supply can be considered an alternative, after execution of the Memorandum of Understanding, until the increased entitlement is implemented. An additional 1.8 mgd (annual average) of water is necessary to accommodate buildout. Because provision of the 15.0 mgd entitlement may be delayed by litigation, purchase of additional water may be necessary in the interim. Purchasing water from SCWA is less expensive than building and operating wells.

PF-13 Continue to collect and analyze monthly groundwater level data to assist in management and operation of Rohnert Park's municipal wellfield. Coordinate with other agencies on regional drawdown impacts.

PF-14 Require developers to dedicate new well sites in locations identified by the City and to pay for the cost of new wells, water lines, and other water supply infrastructure needed to accommodate new development.

Water mains may need to be expanded and new wells may be required in order to accommodate new development. Sites dedicated to the City will need to be returned to the dedicatees if not needed for the purpose, unless the City's Subdivision Regulations seek multi-purpose dedications.

Developers should be required not only to install onsite water supply lines, but also to contribute to the cost of offsite improvements. Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management includes specific policies for assessing costs and prioritizing and implementing infrastructure improvements through a Capital Improvement Program.

Conservation

PF-15 Continue to require water-conserving devices for all new development.

Devices include low-flush toilets and low-flow showers and faucets.

PF-16 Require non-residential uses to implement water conservation practices as a condition of development.

SCWA's Water Conservation Section currently consists of five full-time staff members who assists Rohnert Park and other SCWA members. The City imposes the following requirements on new development:

- *All new construction is reviewed for water and wastewater conservation; and*

- *City Ordinance No. 76 requires the City to monitor for water leaks and to notify customers of identified leaks. Water service may be discontinued if the leak is not repaired within five days of receipt of notice.*

The City can consider imposing additional requirements, such as water-efficient landscaping and use of treated wastewater during construction.

PF-17 Develop a comprehensive wastewater flow reduction program for existing and new non-residential uses.

Non-residential uses are already required to install low flush toilets and low flow faucets. The program would also include best management practices, rebates, and water audits, as called for in Policies PF-18 through PF-20 in this section.

PF-18 Work with SCWA to offer rebates on water bills for non-residential uses that reduce water usage.

This policy would be an effective use of water meters, which track the amount of water used. By way of comparison, the City of Santa Rosa offers rebates of $100 to industrial users for every 1,000 gallons of reduced wastewater flow. The same principle can be used to reduce water intake in Rohnert Park.

PF-19 In cooperation with the business community, develop best management practices for water conservation for Rohnert Park business, and then make the information available to the public.

Best management practices are intended as guidelines, not requirements, for water conservation. For example, restaurants can conserve water by giving drinking water to customers only upon demand. SCWA's Urban Water Management Plan includes best management practices that Rohnert Park can consider adopting.

PF-20 At the request of businesses, conduct water audits and work with them to develop plans for reducing wastewater and discharge.

PF-21 Continue to use reclaimed wastewater to irrigate parks, recreational facilities, and landscaping.

Landscaping includes trees and vegetation planted along streets, as well as private business facilities.

PF-22 Adopt and implement a comprehensive water conservation program to encourage efficient water use by City employees and other users of City facilities.

The City should consider the following measures for inclusion in the program:

- *Develop a leak detection and repair program for City facilities;*

- *Reduce washing streets and flushing water mains and storm drains to the level necessary to maintain health and safety standards;*
- *Use water-efficient landscaping, in accordance with the City's established landscaping guidelines;*
- *Cover community pools when not in use in order to reduce evaporation;*
- *Install automatic turn-off fixtures in City facilities;*
- *Use treated wastewater in City construction projects; and*
- *Install flow restricters on hoses and faucets.*

PF-23 Commit to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) of water conservation. Such measures include:

- Requiring meters for all new connections and billing by volume;
- Establishing a program for retrofitting existing un-metered connections and billing by volume;
- Identifying intra- and inter-agency disincentives or barriers to retrofitting mixed-use commercial accounts with dedicated landscape meters; and
- Conducting a feasibility study to assess the merits of a program to provide incentives to switch mixed-use accounts to dedicated landscape meters.

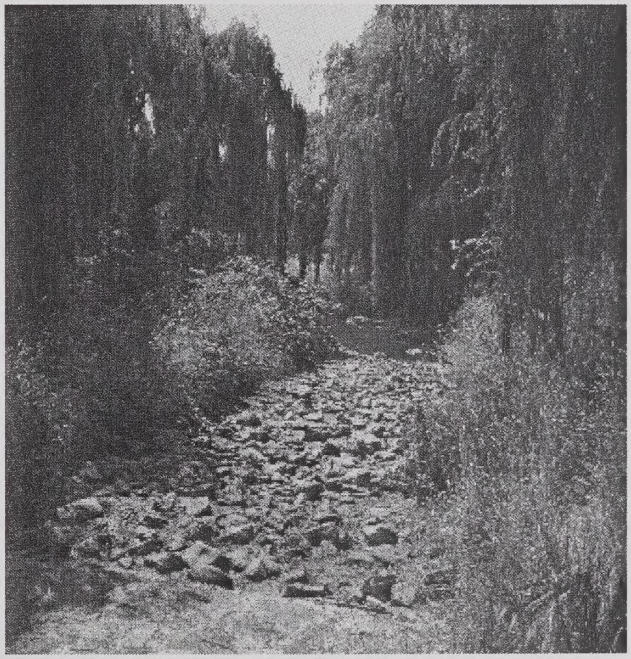
PF-24 Implement applicable large landscape conservation programs and incentives, as identified in the proposed MOU Regarding Water Transmission System Capacity Allocation During Temporary Impairment (4/24/00).

PF-25 Adopt a water conservation rate schedule that: increases as the quantity of water used increases (i.e., a tiered rate schedule); and/or provides seasonal rates or excess-use surcharges to reduce peak demands during summer months.

6 Environmental Conservation

Rohnert Park and its environs are endowed with a bounty of natural resources, including undeveloped and developed open spaces, creeks, agricultural resources, and areas with high potential to sustain wetlands, vernal pools, and wildlife. An overriding goal of the General Plan is to conserve these natural resources to ensure that future development does not adversely affect the environment. The Environmental Conservation Element contains goals and policies to encourage the conservation and proper management of the community's resources. The Element seeks to:

- Guide development in order to make wise and prudent use of the city's natural and cultural resources;
- Maintain and enhance the city's valuable natural resource areas necessary for the continued survival of significant wildlife and vegetation; and
- Ensure the continued protection of the city's natural resources.



6.1 HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL RESOURCES

The city is located in an area which, prior to Euro-American contact, was inhabited by the Coast Miwok Indians and the Southern Pomo Indians. On the alluvial planes in the eastside of the city, there are three recorded Native American (CA-SON-1061, CA-SON-1147, and CA-SON-1923) archaeological sites.[1] These sites contain scattered chert and obsidian stone tool manufacturing debris, and stone tools. There are no recorded cultural resources located on the westside.

The possibility of identifying additional Native American cultural resources can be determined by assessing ethnographic information, environmental setting, and the locations of recorded archaeological sites. Native American cultural resources in this portion of Sonoma County tend to be situated on alluvial plains and at the base of hills, as well as near former and existing sources of water.

The eastside of the city has high potential for discovery of additional Native American cultural resources, for two reasons. First, the presence of recorded sites suggests that there may be others nearby. Second, the area includes broad alluvial flats near Crane, Copeland, and Hinebaugh creeks, and it is next to an area that was once part of a marsh.

The area west of Rohnert Park encompasses a broad alluvial flat that lies within the boundaries of an historic marsh. Areas within a historic marsh are less likely to contain artifacts than areas beside the historic marsh. No archaeological sites have been recorded on the westside. Consequently, there is a low possibility of identification of unrecorded cultural resources in this area.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

There are two recorded historic archaeological sites (C-728 and CA-SON-1913H) on the eastside. In addition, there are two unofficially recorded historic ranching complexes located in the eastside (C-727 and C-728). A third archaeological site located within the eastern project area (CA-SON-1574) consists of materials that have been redeposited as a result of analysis conducted at Sonoma State University (SSU).

On the westside, there are two recorded historic structures, but they are located west of the Bellevue-Wilfred Channel, outside the areas contemplated for growth. Resource C-728 is a tank house and windmill stand that may have belonged to Robert Crane, an early settler. Resource CA-SON-1913H is the archaeological remains of a house that was shown on the 1877 Thompson Atlas.

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[1] Northwest Information Center (NWIC) at Sonoma State University, October 1997.

In addition to the recorded sites, several historic period buildings and structures located on the eastside and westside are depicted on historic maps. Some of them are still standing, while only archaeological remains may be left of others. Although several properties along Wilfred Avenue on the westside have been identified as being potentially historically significant in State and federal inventories, these properties have been determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The possibility remains that additional historic cultural resources will be identified in both the eastside and westside in the future.

Several State laws, most notably CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5(f) and Public Resources Code § 5020-5029 and 21083.2 of the Public Resources Code, protect archaeological and historic resources. CEQA requires assessment of the impacts to unique archaeological resources or Native American culturally significant sites. If a development project is found to cause damage to the resource, reasonable efforts may be required to preserve the resources or leave them in an undisturbed state, or undertake additional mitigation measures if avoidance is not possible. To protect historic resources, the State has formed the State Historical Resources Committee that conducts the State Historic Resource Inventory and maintains the California Register of Historic Resources, which identifies historical landmarks and points of interest. The Committee also provides recommendations for the National Register of Historic Resources.

GOALS: HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

EC-A Conserve historic and archaeological resources for the aesthetic, educational, economic, and scientific contribution they make to Rohnert Park's identity and quality of life.

POLICIES: HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

EC-1 Undertake an inventory of historic resources to determine sites or buildings of federal, State, or local historic significance.

The State Office of Historic Preservation has determined that buildings or structures 45 years or older have the potential to be historically significant. Sections 5020-5029 of the State Public Resources Code addresses historic resource assessment and protection. Since Rohnert Park was first developed in the mid-1950s, the City should undertake this inventory over the next decade. Identified historic resources should be recorded on the State Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory Form (DPR Form 523).

EC-2 Insure the protection of known archaeological resources in the city by requiring a records review for any development proposed in areas that are considered archaeologically sensitive for Native American and/or historic remains. Require construction activities and development adjacent to sites of historic or archaeological resources to avoid degradation by:

- Studying the potential effects of development and construction in the resource;
- Requiring pre-construction surveys and monitoring during any ground disturbance for all development in areas of historical and archaeological sensitivity; and
- Implementing appropriate measures to avoid the identified impacts.

Portions of Rohnert Park's eastside are considered to have the potential to contain additional archaeological resources. Since these areas are designated for future development, adequate policies and measures for protection of known and unknown archaeological resources that can supplement CEQA requirements may need to be incorporated into future plans (including the University District Specific Plan) and development activities. The City should collaborate with SSU to conduct searches, monitor sites, and take appropriate steps.

EC-3 In accordance with CEQA and the State Public Resources Code, require the preparation of a resource mitigation plan and monitoring program by a qualified archaeologist in the event that archaeological resources are discovered.

CEQA requires assessment of a project's potential impact on archaeological resources. In the event that historical or unique archaeological resources are accidentally discovered during construction, materials and their surroundings shall not be altered or collected. A qualified archaeologist must make an immediate evaluation and avoidance measures or appropriate mitigation should be completed, according to CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5 (f). Public Resources Code § 21083.2 includes additional provisions protecting these resources. City involvement in the identification, mitigation, and monitoring of project impacts on these resources will ensure the protection of Rohnert Park's cultural heritage and compliance with State law.

6.2 HABITAT AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Several sites in the Planning Area have the potential to support wetlands, vernal pools, rare plants, and wildlife, and special status species have been found in the Rohnert Park area. Habitat areas and locations of special status species are shown on Figure 6.2-1.

WETLANDS

Mapped soil types (USDA 1972), mapped wetlands (USFWS 1987)[2], aerial photographs (Aero Cartographics 1995), and field assessment conducted in 1997 were used to rank the potential for wetland occurrence in the Planning Area, focusing on areas considered for development. The site classifications include high, moderate, and low wetlands potential.

Sites with high wetlands potential include riparian areas, ditches with hydrophytic vegetation, mapped wetland areas (USFWS 1987), areas with hydric soils (USDA 1972), and other likely wetland areas seen in the field and on aerial photographs (Aero Cartographics June 1995).

Areas in flat or rolling agricultural fields that had no immediately obvious signs of wetlands presence were classified as having a moderate potential to contain wetlands. These areas contained mapped soil types that may have hydric soil inclusions, but aerial photograph and field analysis did not reveal any well-defined wetland indicators.

Mounded, sloping, or urbanized areas that showed little capacity for ponding or conveying water were characterized as having a low potential to contain wetlands. These characterizations were made entirely from aerial photographs and reconnaissance-level field ground truthing.

Because wetlands can occur in existing and abandoned agricultural areas and in riparian areas, large portions of the areas considered for development have the potential to contain wetlands. A large stretch of land approximately 20 acres in size with high potential for wetlands occurs in the area immediately north of the SSU campus, spreading north from Copeland Creek. These are only potential areas, however, and wetlands have not been documented in many of areas designated as having potential.

Regulation of Activities in Wetlands

The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has primary federal authority for administering regulations that concern wetlands within the Planning Area under the Clean Water Act § 404, which governs specified activities in "waters of the United States," including wetlands. The Corps requires that a permit be obtained if a project includes any activity that adversely affects wetlands and involves placement of dredged or fill material into wetlands. The US

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[2] US Fish and Wildlife Service. 1987. National Wetland Inventory Map, Cotati quadrangle. US Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, OR.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and several other agencies provide comment on Corps permit applications. The EPA has provided the primary criteria for evaluating the biological impacts of Corps permit actions in wetlands.

The State's authority in regulating activities in wetlands and waters at the site resides primarily with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The CDFG provides comment on Corps permit actions under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. CDFG is also authorized under the State Fish and Game Code § 1600-1607 to develop mitigation measures and enter into a Stream Alteration Agreement (SSA) with applicants that propose a project that would substantially divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow of a river, stream or lake; substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of a river, stream or lake; or use material from a streambed. The SWRCB, acting through the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), must certify that a Corps permit action meets State water quality objectives (Clean Water Act § 401). In addition, CEQA requirements must be met.

VERNAL POOLS AND RARE PLANT HABITATS

Agricultural activity and urbanization in the Rohnert Park area has eliminated most natural habitat and vegetation, including native vernal pool species. Areas that have not been farmed, have been abandoned for some time, or have been used for grazing, have the potential to contain vernal pools with vernal pool endemic plant species. The potential occurrence of vernal pools and special status plant species habitat was assessed and ranked as high, medium, or low. Vernal pools may provide habitat for rare plants and other species.

Based on analysis of aerial photographs and soil types, several sites in the Rohnert Park area were found to have high potential for vernal pools. On the west side, the two identified high-potential sites are located along the Bellevue-Wilfred Channel. On the east side, the only identified high-potential site is found along Railroad Avenue near Petaluma Hill Road.

High vernal pool and rare plant habitat potential occurs in areas used for grazing or open space, with known mapped vernal pool soil types, and clear signatures on aerial photographs. Existing and abandoned agricultural fields or areas used for grazing with flat to rolling topography were classified as having a moderate potential to contain vernal pools. Mounded, sloping, farmed, riparian, or urbanized areas were characterized as having a low potential to contain vernal pools.

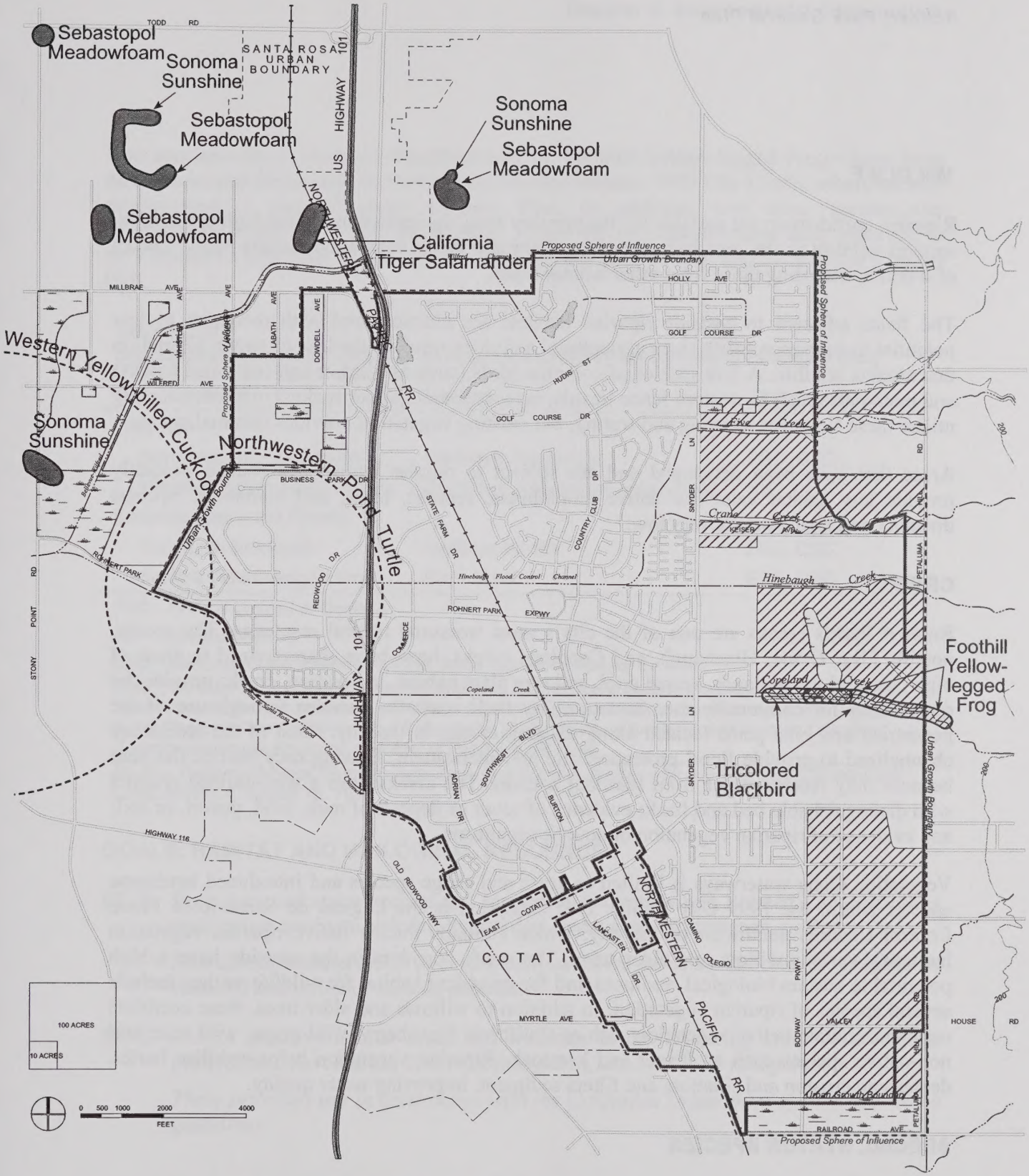

Figure 6.2-1

Habitat Areas and Special Status Species

WILDLIFE

Riparian corridors on the eastside are the primary areas designated as having high potential to support wildlife as the presence of surface water and dense vegetation attracts many species of wildlife, including those from other habitat types.

The fields adjacent to eastside riparian habitats are characterized with moderate to low potential to support wildlife since agricultural activities result in the loss of native vegetation that attracts wildlife. A few species of common birds (such as killdeer and red-tailed hawks) and mammals (such as western fence lizards, raccoons, and gopher snakes) may occasionally utilize these fields for foraging and resting, but existing vegetation provides minimal cover.

Areas that have been developed and are subject to regular human disturbance generally provide low habitat value for native amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Species diversity and abundance is very low.

CREEKS

Rohnert Park's creeks are one of the city's most treasured natural resources. The creeks, notably Five, Crane, Hinebaugh, and Copeland creeks, have been characterized as areas of high potential for wetlands, vernal pool, and rare plant habitat. In addition, creeks provide the opportunity for community members to enjoy their aesthetic qualities through use of the pedestrian and bike paths located along existing creeks in the city. Most of the creeks are channelized to provide flood protection and are intermittent, flowing only part of the year because they receive water from seasonal sources. The creeks have a well-defined channel with distinguishable bed and bank; evidence of scour or deposit of rock, sand, gravel, or soil; and evidence of riparian vegetation or aquatic organisms.

Vegetation along waterways is limited to grass and sedge species and introduced landscape species within the 1999 City Limits. One exception is the Laguna de Santa Rosa Flood Control Channel southwest of the city, which contains thicker native riparian vegetation including various willow and alder trees. The creek corridors in the eastside have a high potential to sustain biological resources and for providing habitat for wildlife as they include several species of riparian vegetation. In addition to willows and alder trees, these corridors may also contain native vegetation such as California blackberry, wild grape, wild rose, and non-native species such as fennel and hemlock. Riparian vegetation helps stabilize banks, decreasing erosion and siltation, and filters sediment, improving water quality.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

As shown in Table 6.2-1, only four special status species are potentially found within the Rohnert Park Urban Growth Boundary. Figure 6.2-1 shows where the species have been observed and the potential extent of area that potentially serves as the species' habitat.

Two species—the Tri-colored Blackbird and the Foothill Yellow-legged Frog—have been detected around the Laguna de Santa Rosa, near the western 1999 City Limits, where no new development is planned under General Plan. In addition, two other species—the Northwestern Pond Turtle and the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo—have been observed in the Copeland Creek area on the eastside, between the SSU campus and the planned Concert Hall.

Table 6.2-1:
Special Status Species That May Inhabit the Rohnert Park Sphere of Influence (SoI)

Common Name	*Species*	*Status*
Westside		
Northwestern Pond Turtle	*Clemmys marmorata*	FSC, CSC
Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*	SE
Eastside (Copeland Creek)		
Tricolored Blackbird	*Agelaius tricolor*	FSC, CSC
Foothill Yellow-legged Frog	*Rana boylii*	FSC, CSC

FSC - Federal Species of Concern

SE - State Endangered

CSC - California Department of Fish and Game Species of Special Concern

Note: There are other species in the Planning Area that are found outside the Urban Growth Boundary. These include: the Sebastopol Meadowfoam (Livananthes vincolans) on the west side of the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and the California Tiger Salamander (Ambystoma californiese) and Jepsons Linanthus (Linanthus jepsonii) about one mile east of Petaluma Hill Road.

Source: California Natural Diversity Data Base, Overlay Map designed for use with USGS Quadrangle Cotati 38122C6, August 16, 1999.

GOALS: HABITAT AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

EC-B Protect special status species and supporting habitats within Rohnert Park, including species that are State or federally listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare.

New development projects in ecologically sensitive areas should consider impacts on valuable and sensitive natural habitats.

EC-C Protect sensitive habitat areas and wetlands in the following order of protection preference: 1) avoidance, 2) on-site mitigation, and 3) off-site mitigation.

These priorities are in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Game guidelines.

EC-D Maintain existing native vegetation and encourage planting of native plants and trees.

POLICIES: HABITAT AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Special Habitat Areas

EC-4 Cooperate with State and federal agencies to ensure that development does not substantially affect special status species appearing on any State or federal list of rare, endangered, or threatened species. Require assessments of biological resources prior to approval of any development within 300 feet of any creeks, high potential wetlands, or habitat areas of identified special status species, as depicted in Figure 6.2-1.

Ecologically sensitive sites include areas that are classified as having high wildlife habitat value, high wetlands potential or high vernal pool and rare plant habitat potential. Also, special status species have been observed in the vicinity of Rohnert Park. Conservation will provide for the perpetuation of threatened, endangered, and other rare species, as well as the protection of the unique and diverse ecology of these areas as a whole.

Development located in or adjacent to these ecologically sensitive areas must complete a site-specific assessment of biological resources as part of the development review process. The City's environmental review process would be used to impose appropriate mitigation measures on development to reduce impacts on sensitive habitat and special status species.

Wetland Conservation

EC-5 Require development in areas with high and moderate wetlands potential and habitat areas delineated in Figure 6.2-1, as well as other areas where wetland or habitat for special-status species is present, to complete assessments of biological resources."

Assessments of biological resources would consider the impacts on wetlands and the special status species supported by this habitat. Appropriate mitigation measures may be required as a condition of approval for development that significantly impacts wetlands or special status species. If any development is permitted within wetlands, mitigation measures must be considered. This mitigation may include providing wetland habitat of the same type as the lost habitat, equal in size or larger than existing conditions. Off-site mitigation in designated open space, the community separator, or other similar areas should be required in cases where on-site avoidance or mitigation is not possible. Off-site mitigation sites should be as close to the project site as possible.

Wetlands are a subset of "waters of the United States" and receive protection under the Clean Water Act § 404. Wetlands are defined by the federal government [CFR § 328.3(b), 1991] as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in

saturated soil conditions. Under normal circumstances, the federal definition of wetlands requires all three wetland identification parameters to be met, whereas the CDFG definition requires the presence of at least one of these parameters. For this reason, identification of wetlands by CDFG consists of the union of all areas which are periodically inundated or saturated, or in which at least seasonal dominance by hydrophytes may be documented, or in which hydric soils are present. The CDFG does not normally have direct jurisdiction over wetlands unless they are subject to jurisdiction under Streambed Alteration Agreements or they support State-listed endangered species. The CDFG recommends a minimum buffer, measured outward from the edge of any wetland, be established to protect the wetlands.

EC-6 Work with private, non-profit conservation, and public groups to secure funding for wetland protection and restoration projects.

Since the City's ability to fund these projects is limited, funding for restoration projects should be sought from a variety of sources. The City should consider creation of a "wetlands bank" on the westside areas not contemplated for development or in the proposed golf course. The bank would provide a large area for off-site mitigation of development located elsewhere in the city, in the event that onsite avoidance or mitigation is not feasible.

Native Species

EC-7 Encourage planting of native vegetation in new development sites, parks, public areas, and open space.

Guidelines should be developed that include a list of native species that may be planted as part of landscaping associated with future development. Drought tolerant and low maintenance species should be emphasized.

EC-8 As part of the City's Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (see Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities), institute an ongoing program to remove and prevent the re-establishment of invasive plant species from ecologically sensitive areas, including City parks and other City-owned open space.

Removal of invasive species from public parks and open space or in areas with high wetland potential, is required only where these species are known to threaten habitat for special status plant and animal species. Removal of invasive species may also be required if they are a notable fire hazard in parks or open space.

Vegetation

EC-9 As part of the City's Capital Improvement Program (see Policy GM-15 in the Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management), incorporate a tree planting program for new and existing streets and maintenance of existing trees.

Trees growing in urban settings provide environmental benefits including energy carbon-dioxide absorption, reduced air and noise pollution, and erosion control. Trees also beautify, shade, and mitigate the 'urban heat island effect' by shading pavement and other dark surfaces and through the cooling effects of their evapotranspiration. Funding should be sought from a variety of sources, including local conservation groups. Existing businesses and residents should be encouraged to plant more trees in parking areas and building landscaping. Native tree species should be encouraged over non-native species.

The City should consider instituting an urban forest management program, establishing varieties, size and spacing requirements, maintenance standards, and priority planting schedules.

EC-10 As part of development approval in any new growth area, require participation in a landscape assessment district, with responsibility for maintaining creekways, open spaces, landscaped medians, and other similar features.

Planting of native vegetation with minimal water demand should be encouraged in the district.

EC-11 As part of the update of the City's Zoning Ordinance, establish landscape and tree planting standards, including provisions for large paved areas such as parking lots.

EC-12 Protect oaks and other native trees that are of significant size through the establishment of a Heritage Tree Preservation Ordinance.

Creeks

EC-13 Maintain creek protection zones extending a minimum of 50 feet (measured from the tops of the banks and a strip of land extending laterally outward from the top of each bank) for creeks, with extended buffers where significant habitat areas or high potential wetlands exist (Figure 6.2-2). Where high potential wetland or other biological resources exist, require appropriately wide buffers to encompass and protect the resource. Development shall not occur within this zone, except as part of greenway enhancement (for example, trails and bikeways). Require City approval for the following activities within the creek protection zones:

- Construction, alteration, or removal of any structure;
- Excavation, filling, or grading;
- Removal or planting of vegetation (except for removal of invasive plant species); or
- Alteration of any embankment.

Rohnert Park's creeks are a key part of the City's open space network. They are valuable physical, aesthetic, recreational, and ecological assets. Protection of creeks protects not only surface water quality, but also reduces flood risks, preserves bio-

diversity and habitat, minimizes erosion of stream banks, and prevents downstream siltation. The General Plan designates 3.5 miles of creekways in the new growth areas on the City's eastside. Wider buffers—up to about 150 feet from the creek bank—could be required because high potential wetland areas alongside creeks in some areas extend to about a 150-foot width.

EC-14 As part of specific plans, require evaluation and implementation of appropriate measures for creek bank stabilization, and any necessary steps to reduce erosion and sedimentation, but preserve natural creek channels and riparian vegetation.

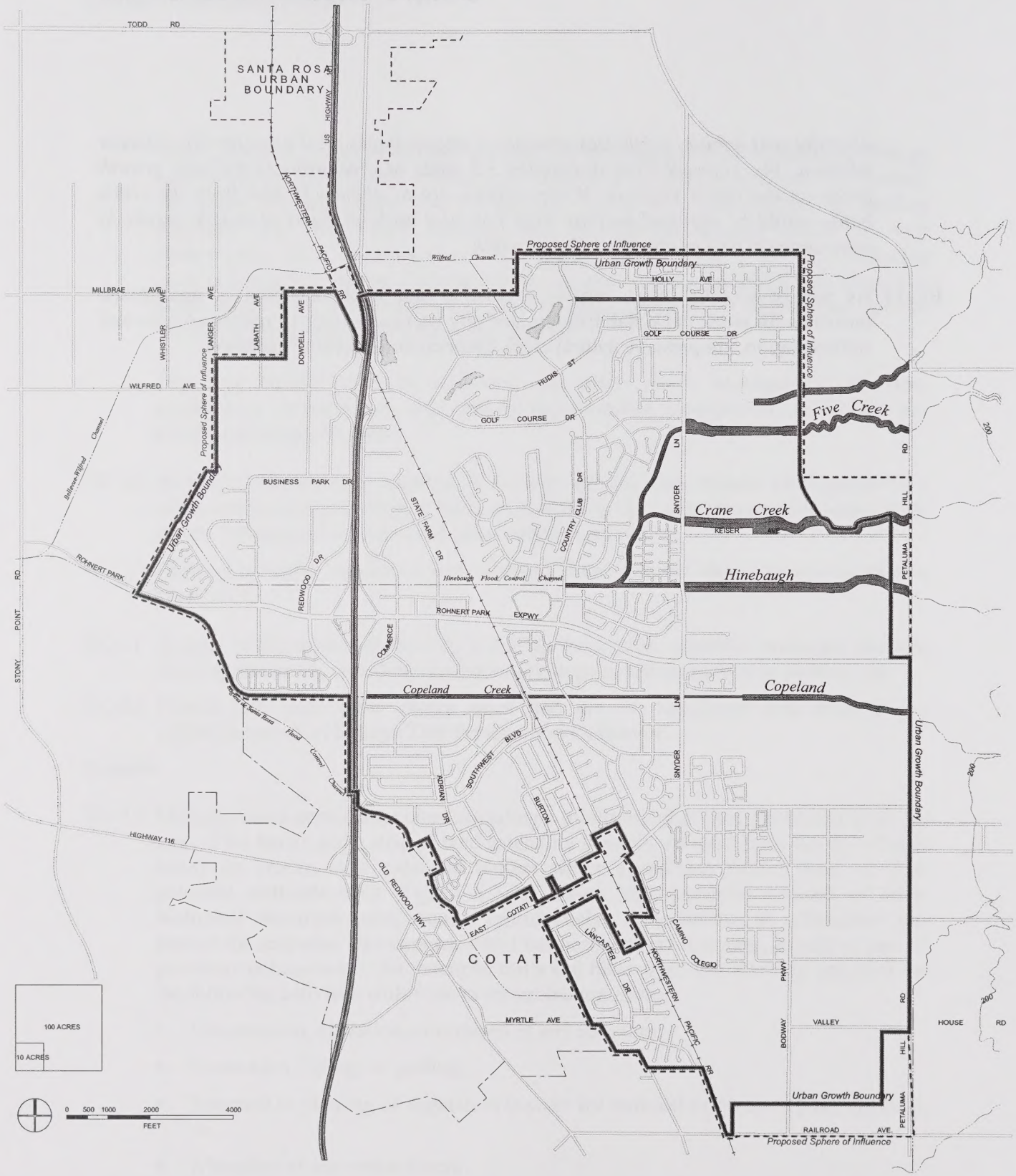

Figure 6.2-2

Creek Protection Zones

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

6.3 WATER QUALITY

Protection of water quality is critical for the health and safety of Rohnert Park residents and employees, especially since the City relies on wells for the majority of its water supply. Water quality is a regional issue that is regulated at county, State, and federal levels.

REGIONAL REGULATION

Point sources of pollution are regulated through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process. Permits are required under NPDES for all publicly operated treatment plants and for surface-water runoff in urban areas. These permits specify the discharge limits for certain pollutants and ensure that local industries pre-treat the pollutants they discharge into treatment plants.

For the purposes of administering NPDES, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has jurisdiction over nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) in California. Rohnert Park falls under the authority of the North Coast RWQCB, which is responsible for implementing State policy through the preparation of regional plans for water quality control and the regulation of all activities affecting water quality.

NONPOINT POLLUTION SOURCES

The quality of groundwater and water flowing into the city's creeks is most likely to be affected by nonpoint pollution sources in Rohnert Park, simply because they are not as rigorously regulated as point sources. Development can potentially pose a threat to surface and groundwater quality through construction sediment, materials used on-site, and related increases in automobile use. The RWQCB has limited the amount of treated wastewater that can be discharged into the Russian River. Use of reclaimed water for irrigation helps reduce the amount of water discharged to the River.

Rohnert Park currently derives its water supply from 31 active wells (in 1999) and 8 active connections to the Sonoma County Water Agency's (SCWA) Petaluma Aqueduct, which supplies water from Lake Sonoma, the Russian River, and other sources. The City's water supply and water system are regulated by the State Health Service Department. This Department requires that the City's water supply be tested on a regular basis to guarantee water quality. Tests are conducted to assure that maximum contaminant levels are not exceeded. The City and SCWA have conducted such tests continually and water supplies have consistently met all State requirements.

The City periodically obtains well water samples and submits them for laboratory analysis. The laboratory tests are capable of detecting minute levels of bacteria, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, organic chemicals, inorganic chemicals, nitrates, radioactivity, corrosivity, triholomethanes, iron, manganese and other substances for a total of 139 separate items.

In 1999, well water did not exhibit concentrations of any pollutants that would be considered health hazards. In 1997, well water did not meet water quality standards for iron and manganese in five wells prior to treatment. These are not considered health hazards, only nuisance problems. After treatment, the levels of iron and manganese were reduced below the Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL).

GOALS: WATER QUALITY

EC-E Comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's regulations and standards to maintain and improve the quality of both surface water and groundwater resources.

EC-F Enhance the quality of surface water and groundwater resources and prevent their contamination.

Contamination may result from erosion, sedimentation, and the dumping of debris and refuge.

EC-G Undertake steps to minimize the depletion of groundwater resources.

EC-H Where feasible, given flood control requirements, maintain the natural condition of waterways and flood plains and protect watersheds to ensure adequate groundwater recharge and water quality.

EC-I Ensure that the City's drinking water continues to meet or exceed water quality standards.

EC-J Discourage use of insecticides, herbicides, or toxic chemical substances within the city and encourage development and use of pesticide and fertilizer management plans for landscaped areas.

POLICIES: WATER QUALITY

EC-15 Continue working with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to protect water quality.

The City is currently exempt from the NPDES requirement, but the City will be required to comply with NPDES when the population of Rohnert Park grows beyond 50,000 people, which it is projected to do at buildout. (See Chapter 7: Health and Safety.)

EC-16 Regularly monitor water quality to maintain high levels of water quality for human consumption and ecosystem health.

EC-17 Work with the relevant agencies to ensure that groundwater supplies are not contaminated in the recharge areas east of the city.

EC-18 Protect waterways by prohibiting the dumping of debris and refuse in and near waterways and storm drains.

EC-19 Require new construction to utilize site preparation, grading, and foundation designs for erosion control to prevent sedimentation and contamination of streams.

Construction activities such as grading, excavating, and filling, may result in the exposure of bare soil. Rain and wind may erode this soil, transporting soil particles to creeks and storm drain systems and resulting in declining water quality. The sedimentation can reduce the water flow capacity of these waterways, contributing to increased risk of flooding.

EC-20 Prepare and disseminate information about the potentially harmful effects of toxic chemical substances and safe alternative measures, including information about safe alternatives to toxics for home and garden use.

EC-21 Establish development standards for new construction adjacent to riparian zones to reduce sedimentation and flooding.

Standards should include:

- *Requirements that low berms or other temporary structures such as protection fences be built between a construction site and riparian corridor to preclude sheet-flooding stormwater from entering the corridors during the construction period.*
- *As part of construction permits, require the installation of storm sewers before construction occurs to collect stormwater runoff during construction.*

  Development standards could also include minimizing paved areas, retaining large areas of undisturbed, naturally vegetated habitat to allow for water infiltration, and intermixing areas of pavement with the naturally vegetated infiltration sites to reduce the concentration of stormwater runoff from pavement and structures.

6.4 AIR QUALITY

While air quality is largely a regional issue, the protection of air quality is vital to the overall health of the environment and the attractiveness of any locality. Since Rohnert Park is located in a valley, temperature inversions may occur, preventing the dispersal of pollutants.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA AIR BASIN

Rohnert Park is located in the northern region of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area air basin. Air quality in the basin is monitored by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), which operates a regional network of air pollution monitoring stations. BAAQMD determines if the federal and State standards for criteria air pollutants and emission limits of toxic air contaminants are being achieved.

Under the federal Clean Air Act, the EPA classifies air basins, or portions thereof, as either "attainment" or "nonattainment" for the national standards. Likewise, an air basin is classified under the California Clean Air Act with respect to the achievement of the State standards. The Bay Area is considered "attainment" for all of the national standards, with the exception of ozone. It is considered "nonattainment" for State standards for ozone and suspended particulate matter (PM-10).

In 1991, the *Bay Area '91 Clean Air Plan* (1991 Clean Air Plan) was developed to address the nonattainment status of the Bay Area with respect to the State ozone standard. The 1991 Clean Air Plan included more control strategies than the corresponding Bay Area federal ozone plan since the State ozone standard is more stringent than the national ozone standard. The 1991 Clean Air Plan has been updated twice, in 1994 and 1997, with the continued goal of improving air quality through tighter industry controls, cleaner fuels and combustion in cars and trucks, and increased commute alternatives.

The Bay Area's air quality is influenced largely by motor vehicle use. Automobile ownership and use are increasing at fast rates. However, the trend towards a newer, cleaner vehicle mix will serve to counteract some of the negative air quality impact associated with increased vehicle use. Overall, a net reduction in the emissions of ozone precursors and carbon monoxide is expected, while particulate matter emissions are expected to increase into the future.

CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANTS

The federal Clean Air Act requires the EPA to identify National Ambient Air Quality Standards (national standards). The EPA has established national standards for six criteria air pollutants, including ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM-10, and lead. Under State law, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has established State ambient air quality standards (State standards) that are generally more stringent than the

corresponding national standards. Pollutants for which ambient air quality standards have been established are referred to as "criteria air pollutants."

The BAAQMD air quality monitoring station nearest to Rohnert Park is located in Santa Rosa, ten miles north of Rohnert Park. Relatively few days of poor air quality with measured pollutants exceeding State standards were recorded at the Santa Rosa monitoring station and improvements in air quality have been documented during the past 15 years. The air pollutant summary for the Santa Rosa monitoring station is included in Table 6.4-1

Table 6.4-1:
Santa Rosa Air Pollutant Summary, 1997-1998, 5th Street Monitoring Station

		Monitoring Data by Year		
Pollutant	*Standard*[2]	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*
Ozone				
Highest 1-hr. average, ppm[2]	0.09	0.082	0.093	0.068
Number of days above standard		0	0	0
Carbon Monoxide				
Highest 8-hr. average, ppm	9.0	3.00	3.34	3.24
Number of days above standard		0	0	0
Nitrogen Dioxide				
Highest 1-hr. average, ppm	0.25	0.062	0.061	0.057
Number of days above standard		0	0	0
Sulfur Dioxide				
Highest 1-hr. average, ppm	0.25	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Number of days above standard		0		
Particulate Matter (PM-10)				
Highest 24-hr. average, µg/m[3]	50	37	85	52
Number of days above standard		0	2	1

1. ppm = parts per million; µg/m
2. State standard, not to be exceeded.
3. µg/m = micrograms per cubic meter

Source: California Environmental Protection Agency, Air Resources Board, California Air Quality Data, 1996, 1997 and 1998.

TOXIC AIR CONTAMINANTS

Unlike criteria air pollutants, ambient air quality standards have not been established for toxic air contaminants. These pollutants are typically carcinogens, mutagens, or reproductive toxins. Regulation of toxic air contaminants is achieved through federal and State controls on individual sources. The preferred technique for reducing toxic air emissions is source reduction. As part of a local control strategy in the Bay Area, all applications for new

stationary sources are reviewed to ensure compliance with required emission controls and limits.

BAAQMD's 1997 Annual Report on its Toxic Air Contaminant Control Program lists four dry cleaners and the Weyerhaeuser Company at 5600 State Farm Drive. These sources do not emit hazardous quantities of toxic contaminants. The Weyerhaeuser Company's facilities emit 7.2 pounds of benzene per year, considered a small quantity. By way of comparison, various large service stations emit more than 7.2 pounds of benzene per year. The amount of pollutants from the four dry-cleaning establishments are very low.

Sensitive Receptors

Some people are more sensitive than others to air pollutants. Heightened sensitivity may be caused by health problems, proximity to the emissions source, and duration of exposure to air pollutants. Sensitive receptors are facilities that house or attract children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollution. Hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, and residential areas are examples of sensitive receptors. Residential areas are considered sensitive to poor air quality as people in residential areas are often at home for extended periods.

GOALS: AIR QUALITY

EC-K Continue to work toward improving air quality and meeting all federal and State ambient air quality standards and by reducing the generation of air pollutants both from stationary and mobile sources, where feasible.

While Rohnert Park's air quality meets State standards, the City has a responsibility to contribute to regional air quality improvement efforts.

EC-L Encourage land use and transportation strategies that promote use of alternatives to the automobile for transportation, including bicycling, bus transit, and carpooling.

Motor vehicle emissions, regulation of which is preempted by State laws, are the major source of criteria air pollutants in the Bay Area Air Basin, accounting for the vast majority of carbon monoxide and particulate matter and over a quarter of the reactive oxygen gas and nitrogen dioxide in the region. A majority of automobile emissions in the city result from regional through trips on US 101. Thus, while reduced traffic congestion or vehicle miles traveled in Rohnert Park will only minimally impact the Bay Area's air quality, the City's planning decisions can help to moderately reduce motor vehicle use, contributing to cumulative reductions in emissions across the entire Bay Area. Increased use of transit and carpooling, coupled with land use and circulation patterns that promote walking and bicycling, can lead to a decrease in daily trips, less emissions, and improved air quality.

Reducing the reliance on automobiles will minimize air pollution in the city. The Transportation Element includes policies for bicycle and pedestrian circulation to

reduce emissions and alleviate traffic congestion. Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management includes policies that encourage pedestrian and transit travel between home and work and provide housing near SSU, reducing negative air quality impacts. Of particular importance are proposals designed to expand the bicycle route system in Rohnert Park and encourage the use of bicycles, development of a rail transit system on the Northwestern Pacific railroad and encouraging use of bus transportation systems. See Chapter 4: Transportation for related goals and policies.

POLICIES: AIR QUALITY

EC-22 Cooperate with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to achieve emissions reductions for nonattainment pollutants, including carbon monoxide, ozone, and PM-10, by implementation of air pollution control measures as required by State and federal statutes.

EC-23 Use the City's development review process and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations to evaluate and mitigate the local and cumulative effects of new development on air quality.

BAAQMD's CEQA Guidelines should be used as the foundation for the City's review of air quality impacts under CEQA.

EC-24 Adopt the standard construction dust abatement measures included in BAAQMD's CEQA Guidelines.

These measures would reduce exhaust and particulate emissions from construction and grading activities.

EC-25 Prohibit emission-generating facilities in the Northwest Specific Plan area or in the planned industrial areas in the southeast.

EC-26 Encourage new residential development and remodeled homes to install clean-burning fireplaces and wood stoves.

Many homes in Rohnert Park are equipped with fireplaces, which are a growing source of localized air pollution. Wood smoke released from fireplaces and wood stoves contains carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and PM-10. Wood burning should be encouraged only in stoves and fireplaces designed to minimize air pollutants. Pollution can be reduced by installing gas fireplaces or EPA certified wood heaters and operating existing fireplaces and wood stoves more efficiently.

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7 Health and Safety

State law requires that the Health and Safety Element address the protection of the community from risks posed by environmental hazards. These include effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, and ground failure, geologic hazards including landslides and subsidence, flooding, and hazardous materials and waste. The Health and Safety Element addresses these topics as well as emergency preparedness and management.

7.1 SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Rohnert Park is located in the Santa Rosa-Petaluma Valley where the underlying geologic structure is characterized by sediments deposited by streams on floodplains, alluvial deposits, and basins. This geologic structure is depicted in Figure 7.1-1. Overall, general geologic conditions, slopes, and soils do not vary significantly from one part of the city to another.

The geologic formations in Rohnert Park range in age from Jurassic to Holocene. The Franciscan Complex of Jurassic-Cretaceous age is the oldest geologic unit and constitutes the basement rock in the vicinity. The Franciscan Complex consists of a chaotic mixture of deformed sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic rocks. Although at a great depth beneath Cotati valley, the Franciscan is exposed in the surrounding highlands. During the late Tertiary age, marine sediments and volcanic rocks were deposited over a large area of the Franciscan Complex. Sedimentary rocks of the Petaluma formation and volcanic rocks of the Sonoma group underlie the valley alluvium and are exposed in the hills to the east. Several hundred feet of alluvial sediments of Quaternary age have been deposited in the Cotati Valley by streams draining the surrounding highland area[1].

Soils within the city are almost entirely Clear Lake clays, as shown in Figure 7.1-2. The soils, typical of poorly drained basins and floodplains, were formed from alluvial sediments derived from the surrounding highlands. Clear Lake clays typically have low permeability, slow runoff characteristics, low erosion potential, high shrink-swell potential, and may be corrosive to uncoated steel products[2].

SEISMIC HAZARDS

There are no known active faults within Rohnert Park. The Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek fault zone lies about five miles to the east of the city. The San Andreas Fault System is located approximately 15 miles west of the city. During the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, Rohnert Park experienced sustained shaking lasting 15 seconds and little damage. Secondary seismic hazards that could affect Rohnert Park include ground-shaking, liquefaction, and ground settlement. Since virtually all construction in Rohnert Park occurred after the incorporation of earthquake safety design in California construction, there are no known structures in Rohnert Park that would be specifically hazardous during an earthquake, such as unreinforced masonry buildings. The City's Emergency Management Plan is discussed in Section 7.5.

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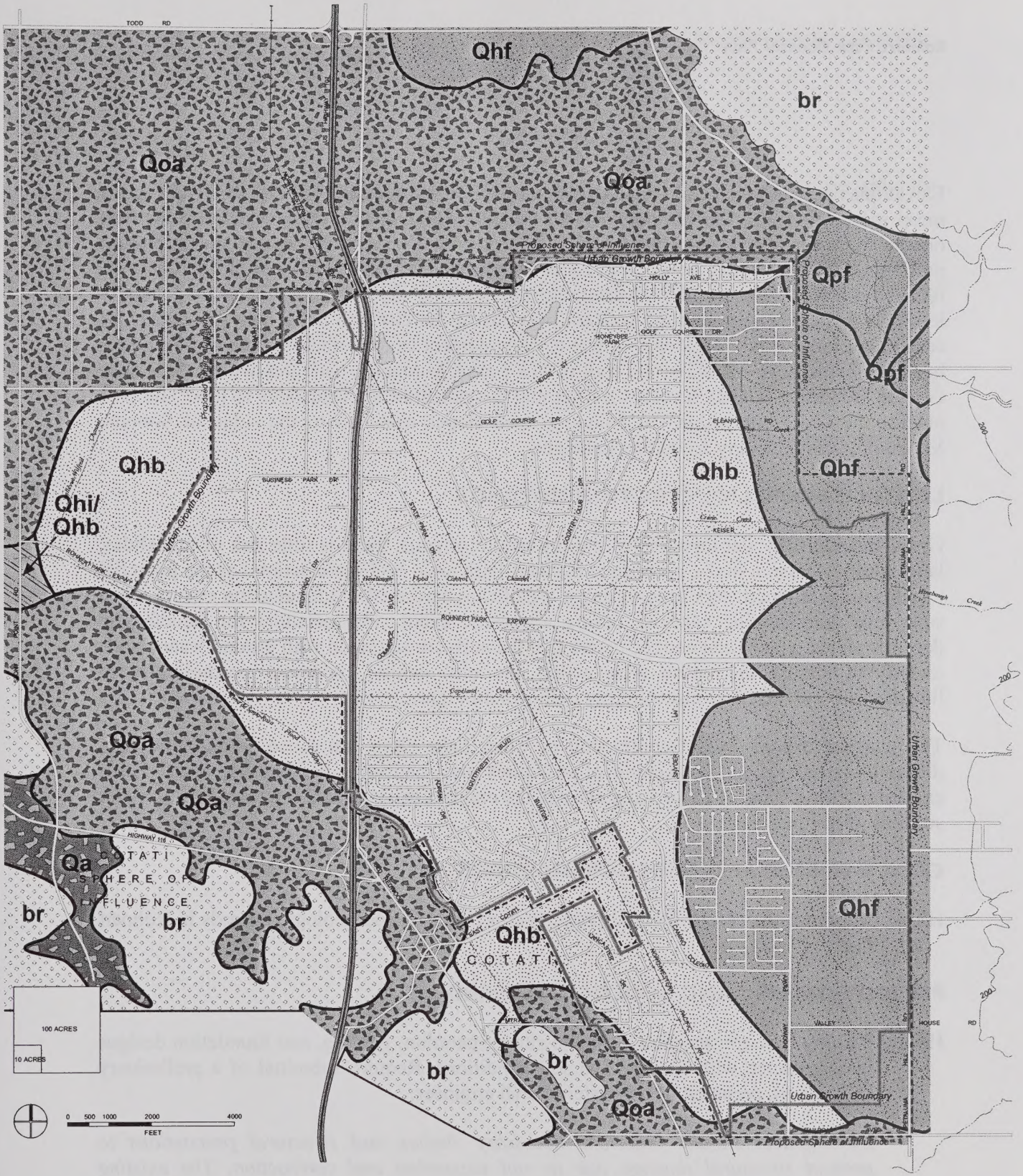
[1] Herzog Associates, Preliminary Geologic and Soil Evaluation, New Civic Center, Rohnert Park, CA, 1989

[2] USDA, 1972



Qhi/Qhb Latest Holocene flood plain and basin deposits

Qhb Holocene basin deposits

Qhf Holocene fan deposits

Qa Late Pleistocene to Holocene alluvium, undifferentiated

Qpf Late Pleistocene fan deposits

Qoa Early or middle Pleistocene alluvium

br Pre-Quaternary deposits and bedrock. Includes Quaternary landslides

Source: William Lettis & Associates, 1994, *Maps showing Quaternary Geology and Liquefaction Susceptibility in the Napa, California, 1:100,000 Sheet*

Figure 7.1-1

Geology

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Elevations range between 230 feet above mean sea level northeast of the city to 90 feet above mean sea level on the western boundary of the city. Slope gradients are generally less than one-half percent in the western portions of the city and about one percent in the eastern portions. Elevations range between 230 feet above mean sea level northeast of the city to 90 feet above mean sea level on the western boundary of the city. Slope gradients are generally less than one-half percent in the western portions of the city and about one percent in the eastern portions. Maximum slopes of five to eight percent exist northeast of the city along the bend in Petaluma Hill Road at the foot of the Taylor Mountain. The area within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is relatively flat and the potential for landslides is low. The area outside the UGB but within the Planning Area slopes eastward to the ridge of Sonoma Mountain, approximately 2,300 feet in height.

LANDSLIDE AND LIQUEFACTION HAZARDS

Given the relatively flat topography and the nature of soils, there is little risk of mudslides, landslides, or erosion in the immediate Rohnert Park area. Soil liquefaction has the potential to impact the Rohnert Park area during a significant earthquake. Liquefaction occurs when soils lose their bearing capacity during a seismic event. The potential for liquefaction depends on the type of soil and the extent that the soils are saturated with ground water. Soils underlying almost the entire area within the city exhibit moderate susceptibility to liquefaction. Liquefaction susceptibility is shown on Figure 7.1-2.

The seasonal expansion and contraction of Clear Lake clays can cause gradual cracking, differential settling, and weakening of structures and roadways. Perhaps the most visible example of the effects of Clear Lake clays is the cracked driveways and foundations in older sections of Rohnert Park.

GOALS: SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

HS-A Minimize the risk to life and property from seismic and geologic hazards in Rohnert Park.

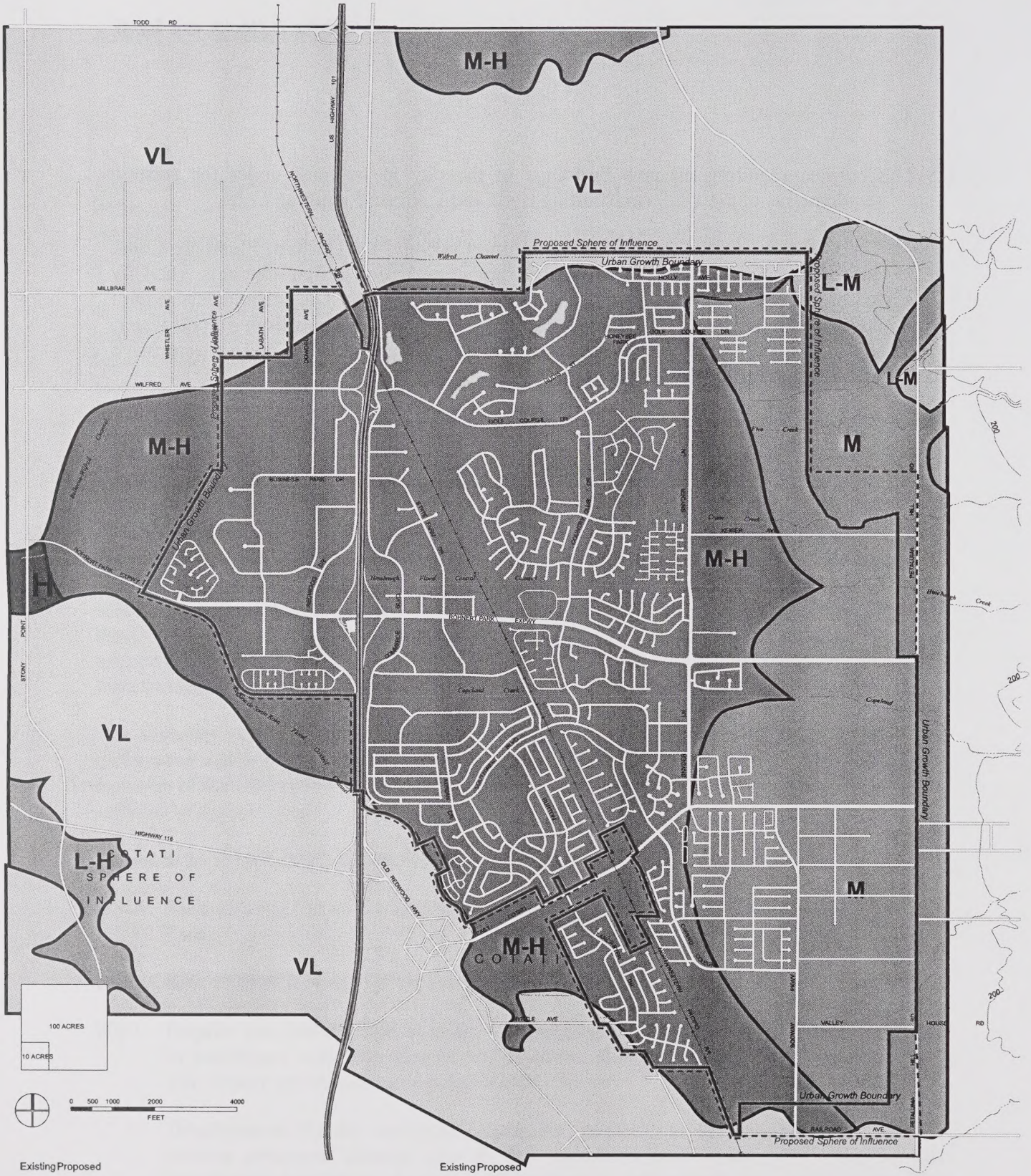
POLICIES: SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

HS-1 Require new construction to utilize site preparation, grading, and foundation designs in accordance with site specific soil conditions. Require submittal of a preliminary soils report, prepared by a registered civil engineer.

Development should undertake necessary studies and structural precautions to prevent structural damage due to soil expansion and contraction. The existing Subdivision regulations require submission of a soils report. For areas in the city that have a moderate or high liquefaction potential, information is available in the California Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 117, Guidelines for Evaluating and Mitigating Seismic Hazards in California.

HS-2 Continue requiring all new buildings in the city to be built under the seismic requirements of the Uniform Building Code and Uniform Plumbing Code.

The City has adopted the Uniform Building Code and the Uniform Plumbing Code, which mandates earthquake resistant building construction design standards. The City has amended these codes, in part, to address soil conditions. The amendments require added reinforcement of slabs and slab floors, protection of slabs from ground water, use of non-expansive fill for building pads and beneath footings, and non-corrosive water piping material underground.



- H — High
- M-H — Moderate to High
- M — Moderate
- L-H — Low to High
- L-M — Low to Moderate
- L — Low
- VL — Very Low

Source: William Lettis & Associates, 1994, *Maps showing Quaternary Geology and Liquefaction Susceptibility in the Napa, California, 1:100,000 Sheet*

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Figure 7.1-2
Liquefaction Susceptibility

7.2 DRAINAGE, EROSION, STORMWATER, AND FLOODING

DRAINAGE

Creeks that drain the mountainsides flow into drainage channels that transverse Rohnert Park generally from east to west. Excluding a small area near East Railroad Avenue, the city drains westerly to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Creek. The area near East Railroad Avenue drains south to Lichau Creek, which flows into the Petaluma River.

Gravel and silt may wash from the slopes into these drainage channels. In recent years, gravel and silt were deposited in an enclosed stormwater drain underneath Goldridge Elementary School and Golis Park. The materials reduced the capacity of the stormwater drain resulting in localized street flooding. The problem has been addressed by annual clearing of the stormwater drain. The Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) installed a siltation basin east of Petaluma Hill Road to intercept the gravel and silt. The city's drainage and 100- and 500-year flood zones are shown in Figure 7.2-1.

Mud and Debris Flows

Mud and debris flows originate in hillside areas having deep topsoil with poor drainage characteristics. Sloped hillsides, which may be the source of mud and debris flows, are located approximately a mile east of Petaluma Hill Road. Given the topography, such mud and debris flows would be channeled into drainage ways that generally flow east to west within the Rohnert Park area. The SCWA regularly removes gravel and silt from these channels to maintain their ability to adequately handle stormwater flows.

EROSION

As shown in Figure 7.2-1, erosion potential is low for almost all soils in the city, according to US Soil Conservation Service ratings. This low potential is primarily related to high soil stability since the slopes in the city are generally less than 2 percent. Erosion is presumably higher for soils in the vicinity of creeks, as well as for loam soils and ponded clay soils. Instances of significant erosion are most likely during construction. The formation of embankments or uneven topography, the effects of machinery, and the removal of vegetation, can contribute to increased rates of erosion.

STORMWATER

Rohnert Park's storm drainage is under joint management of the City and the SCWA. The City maintains responsibility for the system of underground pipes that provides for minor and intermediate drainage, while SCWA maintains the system of open channels that diverts major drainage flows west towards the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Both the open channels and pipe systems are designed to meet SCWA standards and comply with the National Flood Hazard Insurance Program.

Amendments to the Clean Water Act established a two-phased approach to addressing storm water discharges. Phase I, which is currently being implemented, requires National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for separate storm water systems serving large- and medium-sized communities (those with over 50,000 inhabitants), and for storm water discharges associated with industrial and construction activity involving at least five acres. Buildout of this General Plan is expected to increase Rohnert Park's population to about 50,000.

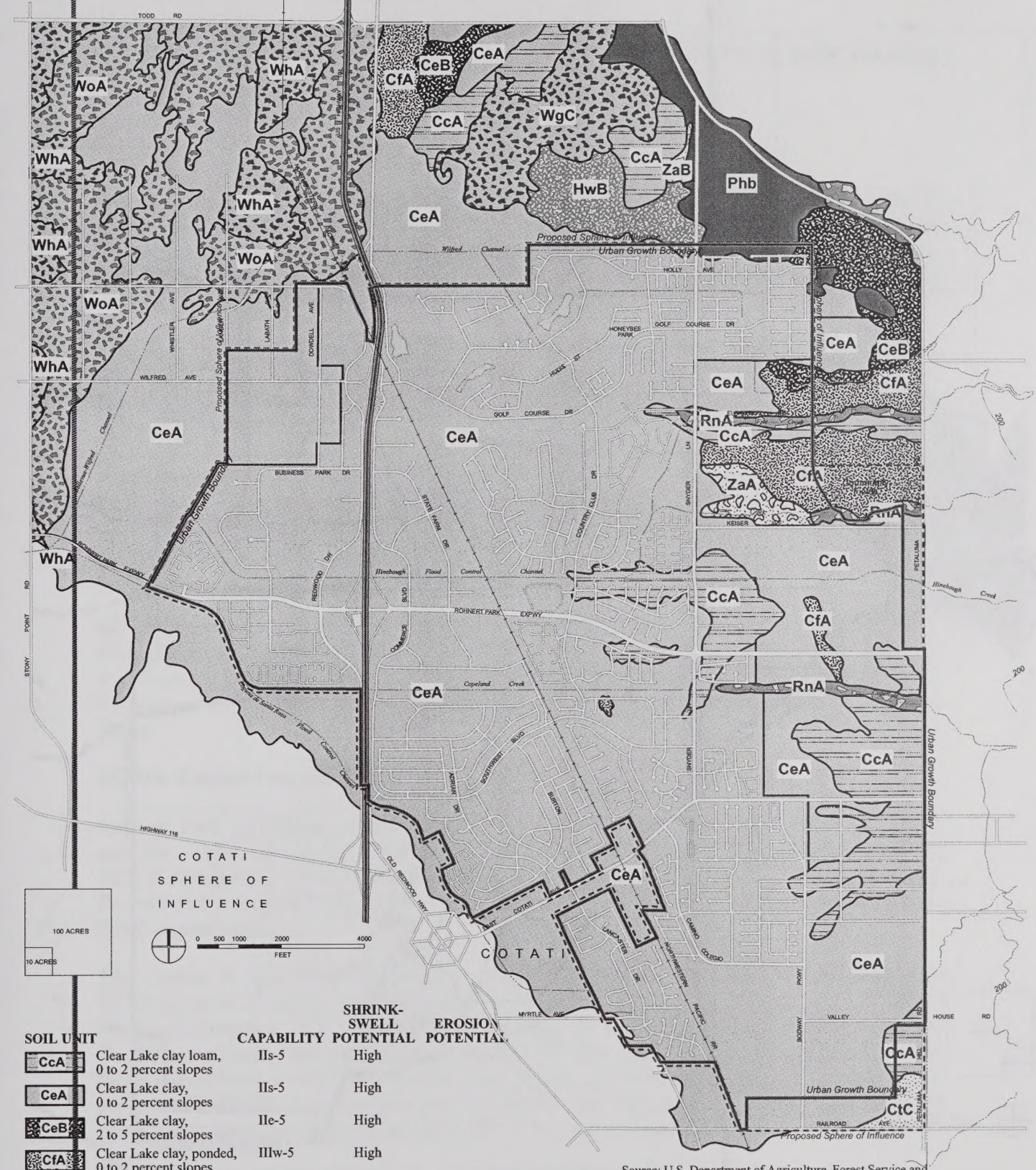
Phase II, which is currently under development by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), will address remaining storm water discharges, including urban areas with populations under 50,000, smaller construction sites, and retail, commercial, and residential activities. NPDES requirements and regulations are expected to be similar for all cities with populations greater than 10,000.

As shown in Figure 7.2-2, there are a few isolated areas within the 1999 City Limits that are located within the 100-year flood zone. Approximately 60 acres of land designated for future development in the eastside is located in the 100-year flood zone, primarily along Copeland Creek and the Hinebaugh Flood Control Channel. A small portion of land within the Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan Area in the westside is located in the 500-year flood zone.

The City enforces flood control standards within 100-year flood hazard areas in accord with the requirements of the National Flood Hazard Insurance Program. In addition to 100-year flood hazard areas, localized, relatively minor flooding has occurred within Rohnert Park in recent years.

Natural flooding results from major rainstorms that cause overflows of stream courses, and may be aggravated by inadequacies in local storm drain facilities. Flooding may occur in two ways:

- Stormwater may overflow the banks of drainage ways because the water flow exceeds the channel capacity; or
- Stormwater may back up and collect in a low area because it cannot flow into a receiving drainage channel.



SOIL UNIT		CAPABILITY	SHRINK-SWELL POTENTIAL	EROSION POTENTIAL
CcA	Clear Lake clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	IIs-5	High	
CeA	Clear Lake clay, 0 to 2 percent slopes	IIs-5	High	
CeB	Clear Lake clay, 2 to 5 percent slopes	IIe-5	High	
CfA	Clear Lake clay, ponded, 0 to 2 percent slopes	IIIw-5	High	
CtC	Cotati fine sandy loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes	IIIe-3	Low	Not a Hazard
Hwb	Huichica loam, shallow, ponded, 0-5 percent slopes	IVw-3	Moderate	
PhB	Pleasanton clay loam 2 to 5 percent slopes	IIe-1	Low	
WhA	Wright loam, wet, 0 to 2 percent slopes	IIIw-3	Low	
WoA	Wright loam, shallow, wet, 0 to 2 percent slopes	IVw-3	Low	
WgC	Wright loam 2 to 9 percent slopes	IIIe-3	Low	
RnA	Riverwash	VIIIw-4	N/A	
ZaA	Zamora silty clay loam 0 to 2 percent slopes	I-1	Moderate	

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service, in cooperation with University of California, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1972, *Soil Survey, Sonoma County, California.*

Figure 7.2-1

Soil Types, Capability, Expansiveness and Erosion Potential

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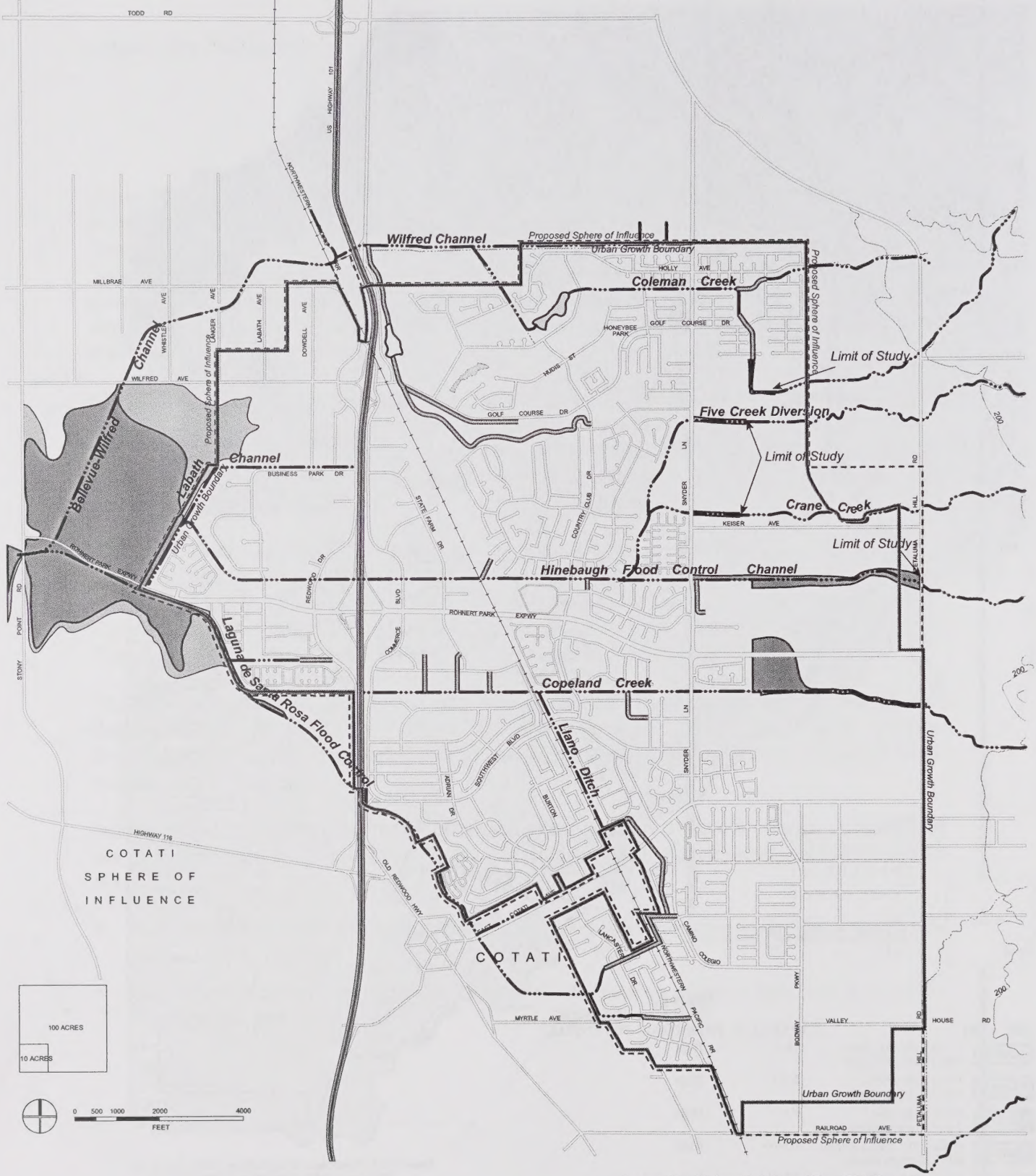

Source: City of Rohnert Park General Plan, 1995, *Figure 5.1;*
FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map, 1991, *Community Panels 060375 855* and *060375 860*

Open Channel

Pipe System (48" and larger)

100-year Flood Zone

500-year Flood Zone

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Figure 7.2-2

Drainage and Flood Zones

One area that experienced street flooding prior to 1999 was in the "G" Section neighborhood. Gravel and silt partially filled and reduced the capacity of an underground storm water drain. During a subsequent storm, storm water backed up street drains. The storm drain has since been cleared of gravel and silt. The SCWA installed a siltation basin to intercept gravel and silt east of Petaluma Hill Road.

Localized flooding also occurred in the "F" Section. In this instance, storm water backed up into low lying streets, the North Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course, and adjacent parcels because storm water was unable to flow into the Bellevue-Wilfred Channel and the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Another area of local flooding in 1999 included portions of the Rancho Verde Mobile Home Park, parts of Martin Avenue, and adjacent commercial/industrial parcels. In this instance storm water backed up and was unable to flow into the Labath Channel. As the rain tapered off and the level of the Laguna de Santa Rosa fell, storm water drained from the flooded areas.

Silt deposited over the years in the Bellevue-Wilfred, Laguna de Santa Rosa, and Labath Flood Control Channels has reduced the capacity of these channels, which has contributed to the flooding problems. The SCWA widened both the Bellevue-Wilfred Flood Control Channel and the Laguna de Santa Rosa and plans to remove accumulated silt in the near future.

SCWA Capital Projects Plan

Rohnert Park participates in the planning and development of drainage and flood control activities within the Laguna-Mark West Zone 1A, administered by SCWA. In March 1998, SCWA circulated a revised Capital Projects Plan for Fiscal Year 1999 to Fiscal Year 2003. Projects in the Capital Projects Plan include improvements for the County's seven designated flood control zones.

The Capital Projects Plan identifies 17 projects for funding in Zone 1A. Projects were identified by an Advisory Committee for the Flood Control Zone, appointed by the SCWA's Board of Directors. Information and criteria used for selecting projects include historical flooding problems, areas benefited, alternative funding available, special safety and health factors, coordination with other public projects, and environmental concerns. Several of the projects will directly help improve potential flooding problems in the Rohnert Park area. All projects are scheduled for completion by the end of Fiscal Year 2000.

GOALS: DRAINAGE, EROSION, STORMWATER, AND FLOODING

HS-B Minimize the risk to life and property from flooding.

HS-C Control erosion and sedimentation to provide flood protection and protect water quality.

POLICIES: DRAINAGE, EROSION, STORMWATER, AND FLOODING

HS-3 Prepare and implement a Storm Water Management Plan to ensure protection of the surface and groundwater resources.

The Storm Water Management Plan should include requirements for periodic monitoring of storm water outfalls, public outreach and education, and the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for a variety of industrial, construction, and municipal activities. Until such time that a Storm Water Management Plan is prepared, the City should use existing regulations pertaining to subdivision design, zoning, building, and grading ordinances and policies to reduce discharge of non-point source pollutants into local streams.

HS-3A Work with the County to ensure that any new development east of Petaluma Hill Road does not interfere with groundwater recharge.

HS-4 Ensure that the City's regulations pertaining to subdivision design, zoning, building, and grading ordinances and policies continue to include measures to minimize erosion and sedimentation.

Policy EC-13 in Chapter 6: Conservation establishes creek protection zones and standards to protect the city's creeks.

HS-5 As part of the building permit process, require all development projects to comply with hydrology and drainage policies incorporated in the applicable Specific Plans. Require the project proponent to design and construct a storm drain system in accordance with the SCWA Flood Control Design Criteria (latest revision), specific to the project. Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive drainage improvements including flow reduction and flood bypass systems in order to ensure protection of surface water quality and stream integrity.

Policy LU-10A stipulates that all specific plans shall address hydrology and drainage for the their respective areas, as well as practices to be incorporated as part of individual development projects.

The storm drain system may include:

- *Street and underground storm drain improvements; and*
- *New underground storm drainage facilities.*

The City should recommend the use of high infiltration measures to reduce stormwater discharge into the regional storm drain system. Measures to divert surface runoff into open areas that have high infiltration capabilities could include ponds built into landscapes, unlined runoff channels, and dispersion points into landscaped areas. Where possible and technically feasible, roof tops and paved areas

should drain into underground dispersal pipes or vegetated percolation beds. Landscaping in parking lots and around building perimeters should be maximized.

The City shall review and approve the proposed drainage system requirements prior to construction on the project site.

HS-6 As part of the building permit process, require new development greater than five acres in size to prepare and implement a site-specific storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) that effectively reduces discharges of stormwater containing sediment and other pollutants resulting from site construction activities. In addition, require all projects, regardless of size, to comply with any other stormwater provisions of the specific plans for their respective areas.

Policy LU-10A stipulates that all specific plans shall address storm-water pollution for their respective areas, as well as practices to be incorporated as part of individual development projects.

The proponent shall comply with all requirements set forth in the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit. SWRCB requires site owners of development projects with construction activity resulting in soil disturbance of an area greater than five acres to comply with the California General Permit to Discharge Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity (NPDES General Permit CAS000002). The Permit requires development and implementation of a SWPPP emphasizing BMPs. The RWRCB maintains a list of suggested BMPs, which are schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management procedures to prevent or reduce pollution.

Policy EC-19 requires site preparation, grading, and foundation designs for erosion control to prevent sedimentation and contamination of creeks.

Policy EC-21 establishes development standards for new construction adjacent to riparian zones to reduce sedimentation and flooding

HS-7 Prepare engineering studies when necessary to update drainage and flood zone maps and, during rainstorms, conduct surveys and document locations of flooding.

HS-8 Systematically conduct maintenance, make repairs, or improve drainage facilities to minimize localized flooding during rainstorms. Provide treatment to first-flush runoff flows, street sweeping programs, and additional source controls to minimize non-point source pollution.

Maintenance should occur more frequently during the winter

HS-9 Use the City's development review process to ensure that proposed development located in 100-year flood zones undertakes measures to provide adequate protection from flood hazards.

HS-10 Continue to use the National Flood Insurance Program standards and regulations as guidelines for implementation of flood damage control programs in Rohnert Park. Work with Federal Emergency Management Agency to update the 1991 Flood Insurance Rate Maps to reflect improvements to Copeland Creek.

HS-11 In cooperation with the Sonoma County Water Agency, maintain flood plain areas, drainage channels, and other drainage structures and improve drainage channel capacity in ways that will preserve the natural character of habitat areas, riparian corridors, and waterways to the maximum extent feasible.

HS-11A Require any new development south of Valley House Road and east of Bodway Parkway located in the Petaluma River drainage basin to undertake site improvements with appropriate drainage measures commensurate with the designed drainage flows for the Petaluma River and Lichau Creek, and subject to hydraulic review by the Sonoma County Water Agency.

All development within Rohnert Park is subject to a hydraulic review by the Sonoma County Water Agency. This hydraulic review computes a maximum quantity of runoff during the 10-year and 100-year storms. Improvements are required either on the project or downstream of the project to mitigate the effects of any increased runoff. The required improvements become a part of the site improvements that are overseen by the City during construction of the project.

Generally, the Lichau Creek drainage basin starts north of Valley House Drive, and then connects to Willow Brook Creek near Old Redwood and Ely. Willow Brook Creek flows through the new industrial area that Petaluma is building at the north end of McDowell, under the freeway, and then connects to the Petaluma River near Petaluma Boulevard. Only a very small portion of the Rohnert Park Planning Area (about 15 acres) contemplated for development is in the Lichau Creek watershed. Because this area has large parcels, a simple way to avoid any runoff increase would be to simply cluster development out of the Lichau Creek watershed and maintain it as open space.

7.3 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

The City is responsible for waste collections and diversion within the incorporated limits. Solid waste disposal facilities are owned and operated by the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works, which also helps maintain the County Integrated Waste Management Plan (CoIWMP) jointly with the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA).

The California Waste Management Act, passed in 1989, required cities to prepare solid waste management planning documents that demonstrate how they would reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills by 25 percent by 1995 and 50 percent by the year 2000. These planning documents are known as the Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) and Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE). The SRRE includes four main components: source reduction, recycling, composting, and special waste. Each component identifies existing diversion programs and examines, evaluates, and selects future diversion programs. Hazardous waste is discussed in Section 7.4.

Rohnert Park's SRRE and HHWE, both adopted in 1992, were incorporated into the 1994 CoIWMP, which consolidates the SRREs and HHWEs prepared by each jurisdiction in Sonoma County. The CoIWMP, which includes a Facility Siting Element, is required to demonstrate the county's long-term ability to ensure the implementation of countywide diversion programs and to provide adequate disposal for local jurisdictions through the siting of disposal and transformation facilities.

SOLID WASTE

In 1995, Rohnert Park achieved a diversion or source reduction rate of 39 percent, which was 14 percent higher than the 1995 statewide diversion goal. However, in 1997, this rate fell to 38 percent, which is 6 percent higher than the estimated state diversion rate. Some of this success was due to the County's comprehensive approach to waste reduction. Diversion goals are met through a combination of local and countywide source reduction, recycling, and composting programs. In adopting this approach, Rohnert Park has agreed in concept to sponsor or develop jointly some programs and facilities with neighboring communities or with the County.

COLLECTION AND RECYCLING

Municipal solid waste is transported to the Central Disposal Site owned and operated by Sonoma County Public Works Department. The site is located approximately five miles southwest of the city in unincorporated Sonoma County. The City does not currently hold a disposal contract directly with the landfill, but contracts for collection and disposal services with private haulers. In 1997, Rohnert Park disposed of 50,528 tons of solid waste (see Table 7.3-1). Of the solid waste generated, 51 percent was used for fuel, 25 percent was recycled, 12 percent was landfilled, eight percent was incinerated, and four percent was treated. Over

4,000 tons of recyclables were collected through residential curbside and commercial collection. Furthermore, over 5,000 tons of yard debris and wood waste was composted.

Table 7.3-1:
Rohnert Park Solid Waste, 1997

Total Waste Generated	50,528 tons
% Used for Fuel	51%
% Recycled	25%
% Landfilled	12%
% Incinerated	8%
% Treated	4%

Source: Integrated Waste Management Report Card, 1997.

The City contracts out to Empire Waste Management for refuse hauling and curbside recycling services for single-family residents. Although there are no buy-back centers in Rohnert Park, two are located north of the city. Commercial recycling includes cardboard, glass, newspaper, and office paper collection. Approximately 2,951 tons of materials were collection through residential curbside collection and 1,070 tons through commercial collection.

The SCWMA sponsors several other waste reduction efforts including the Eco-Desk hotline, the annual Sonoma County Recycling Guide, the SonoMax waste exchange, master gardener home composting workshops, the Recycling Market Development Zone, and Household Toxics Roundups. The regional approach of the SCWMA has helped Sonoma County reduce solid waste at the lowest possible cost.

Expansion of Solid Waste Disposal Facilities

Given current capacity and projected diversion rates, the Central Landfill is expected to reach capacity in approximately 2005. The expansion of the Central Landfill was recently approved by the County, allowing for disposal of solid waste up to 2010.

GOALS: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

HS-D Reduce the generation of solid waste and recycle those materials that are used, to slow the filling of local and regional landfills, in accord with the *California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989.*

POLICIES: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

HS-12 Continue to work toward reducing solid waste and increasing recycling, in compliance with the Sonoma County Integrated Waste Management Plan.

Rohnert Park has a responsibility to meet regional source reduction and recycling initiatives in order to achieve State-mandated waste reduction targets and extend the useful life of existing landfill facilities.

HS-13 As part of development review and environmental analysis, ensure that new multifamily residential and all non-residential development comply with the City's Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) and Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE), as well as the Sonoma County Integrated Waste Management Plan (CoIWMP).

Multifamily residential development include any residential structures with two or more dwelling units.

HS-14 As part of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan, and other programs, explore the feasibility of installing recycling receptacles for plastic and glass beverage containers and papers in parks and other public areas (for example, community recreational facilities, transit stops, and mixed-use districts).

The City and SCWA should consider other recycling strategies, including expanding recycling collection at commercial and multifamily housing.

HS-15 Require new multifamily residential and all non-residential development to incorporate attractive and convenient interior and exterior storage areas for recyclables into new or remodeled buildings, to make recycling activities more convenient for those who use the buildings.

Existing commercial businesses and business parks should be encouraged to install recycling receptacles on their premises. Multifamily residential development include any residential structures with two or more dwelling units.

7.4 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials include a large number of substances that may be dangerous to the public if improperly stored, handled, or disposed. These include toxic metals, chemicals, and gases; flammable and/or explosive liquids and solids; corrosive materials; infectious substances; and radioactive material. Hazardous materials, according to the State Health and Safety Code § 25501(o), "include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material which a handler or the administering agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment."

WASTE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

In accordance with local Households Hazardous Waste Elements (HHWE) and the CoIWMP, the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA) conducts a range of hazardous waste programs. SCWMA conducts hazardous waste collection events at sites throughout Sonoma County. Over ten events are held each year, generally during dry weather months. At least one event is held in Rohnert Park. Rohnert Park businesses and residents may dispose of hazardous waste at any event in the County. Hazardous materials collected are packaged and taken to disposal sites outside Sonoma County.

The Agency plans to establish a permanent hazardous waste collection and temporary storage facility at the Central Landfill. The facility will be open to collect hazardous materials on a weekly basis. Hazardous materials will be transported to disposal sites outside Sonoma County.

SCWMA annually conducts hazardous waste education efforts. These education efforts include distribution of a recycling guide to nearly all households in Sonoma County. The guide lists how to avoid, store, and dispose of household hazardous materials. Ongoing public education campaigns are funded by the SCWMA and grant funds.

Industrial and Commercial Hazardous Materials

State law requires that communities form a Consolidated Unified Protection Agency (CUPA). The CUPA manages the acquisition, maintenance, and control of hazardous waste by industrial and commercial businesses. Rohnert Park contracts with Sonoma County for this service.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous waste is generated in homes and businesses alike, and includes products such as paint, batteries, fertilizers, and used motor oil. These wastes are of concern because they are often improperly managed, resulting in injuries to sanitation workers and damage to collection vehicles, as well as possible toxics leaching from sanitary landfills. Management

of hazardous waste in Rohnert Park occurs under the 1992 HHWE, which was incorporated into the Sonoma County Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

The City's HHWE addresses the wastes that stem from a variety of common household products. Rohnert Park's household hazardous waste management program, outlined in the HHWE, emphasizes public education, source reduction and recycling, mobile and permanent collection facilities, and hazardous waste load checking. Household hazardous waste is collected and disposed of by licensed haulers. Furthermore, SCWMA and the City created a network of private businesses that collect used oil in Rohnert Park. In 1990, it was estimated that Rohnert Park residents generated 20 tons of hazardous waste per year – of which 13 tons are estimated to be either illegally disposed of or stored in homes in Rohnert Park. Only four percent of Rohnert Park's households participated in the County Disposal Program in 1997.

The City currently participates in a SCWMA hazardous waste disposal program, allowing Rohnert Park residents to dispose of hazardous waste in nearby cities. SCWMA plans to establish a permanent collection facility at the Central landfill and reduce the periodic collection events in urban areas.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DISPOSAL SITES

There are no hazardous material disposal sites in operation in the Rohnert Park area. All hazardous waste is placed in containers and shipped to sites outside the community.

The Rohnert Park area does not contain any known historical hazardous material disposal sites. Underground tanks containing petroleum products at scattered sites in the community may have contaminated subsurface earth. Regular, highly detailed, laboratory testing of water from the city's wells, scattered throughout the community, has not detected contaminants from underground tanks or other hazardous materials.

The City's Department of Public Safety investigates illegal hazardous waste dumping. Most illegal hazardous waste dumping in Rohnert Park consists of the disposal of oil and gasoline in storm drains. Signs discouraging hazardous waste dumping were installed in 1997 above all storm drain inlets in the city.

Hazardous Materials Transfer Station

The Safety Kleen Corporation operates a hazardous materials transfer station in Rohnert Park. The total amount of hazardous materials stored at any given time is 2,000 gallons. Hazardous materials are shipped to the company's plant in Reedley, California, for treatment. The primary hazardous material is 1,450 gallons per day, on average, of the mineral spirit Stoddard Solvent. In addition, the transfer station stores approximately 40 gallons of Percloethylene (Perk), a cleaning solvent used by dry cleaning businesses, and 40 gallons of lacquer thinner per day. Toxic materials are obtained from an area extending from San Francisco to Eureka. The recycled materials are sold back to the same businesses. The company does not treat or dispose of any hazardous materials on the Safety Kleen site in Rohnert Park.

GOALS: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

HS-E Minimize the risk to life and property from the generation, storage, and transportation of hazardous materials and waste in Rohnert Park and assure the proper disposal of all hazardous waste that may be generated in Rohnert Park.

HS-F Comply with all applicable regulations and provisions for the storage, use and handling of hazardous substances as established by federal (EPA), State (DTSC, RWQCB, Cal OSHA, Cal EPA), and local (County of Sonoma, City of Rohnert Park) regulations.

HS-G Protect groundwater and soil from contamination by hazardous materials.

POLICIES: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

HS-16 Promote joint, countywide programs to address the generation and disposal of hazardous materials including the Sonoma County Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

HS-17 Develop and implement programs which provide convenient means for residents to properly dispose of household hazardous waste materials.

HS-18 Support efforts to establish a permanent hazardous waste collection and temporary storage facility at the Central Landfill.

HS-H This policy would allow hazardous waste collection events in Rohnert Park and other nearby cities to be phased out. Given the risks of spills and accidents, it would be preferable to have residents and businesses take hazardous waste to a controlled environment away from built-up urban areas.

HS-19 Maintain existing signs discouraging hazardous waste dumping above all storm drain in the city.

The signs should also note locations of current disposal sites.

HS-20 Support SCWMA in their hazardous waste education efforts.

7.5 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The California Emergencies Services Act (State Government Code § 8550-8668) requires each city to prepare and maintain an Emergency Plan for natural, manmade, or war-caused emergencies which result in conditions of disaster or in extreme peril to life. Peacetime emergencies that should be addressed by the Plan include earthquakes, fires, and floods. In 1995, the City adopted a Standardized Emergency Management Plan, which describes the principles and methods to be applied in carrying out emergency operations or rendering mutual aid during emergencies. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) has developed the Standardized Emergency Management System with Annexes, which is consistent with the requirements of the California Emergencies Services Act. The System is updated and revised on an annual basis.

All City departments play a role in the plans and have specific assignments to perform in emergencies. The City coordinates its planning with the County Office of Emergency Services to keep the plans up to date. The City also participates in periodic city and countywide disaster drills that are held to evaluate and critique emergency service preparedness. The Public Safety Headquarters has been designed to function as an Emergency Operations Center for the community.

City emergency preparedness planning focuses on immediate threat to life and property. One generally accepted rule-of-thumb is that citizens and businesses should not expect assistance until 72 hours after a disaster, unless there is an immediate threat to life or property. After a disaster, municipal resources may be limited and must be dispatched to the most serious emergencies.

Earthquake Response

The City is prepared to meet the emergency service needs after a "worst case" earthquake. In 1995, the City revised the "Threat Summary, Earthquake" section of the Standardized Emergency Management Plan. This summary details the impacts of an earthquake of a magnitude of 8.3 on the northern San Andreas Fault.

Response to Hazardous Materials Spills

The City currently maintains a hazardous materials response plan. The Plan builds upon the Sonoma County Operational Area Hazardous Materials Incident Response Plan. The goals of the City's hazardous materials planning are to contain and identify hazardous materials spills and to implement evacuation, clean up, and disposal.

The DPS maintains a hazardous materials team. Members of this team have completed extensive training and qualify as Hazardous Materials Technicians or Specialists. Should a hazardous materials event occur within the city, the hazardous materials team will take a

leading role in protecting the public. The team will follow general response guidelines but must fit the response to the specific incident.

Numerous types of hazardous materials are transported on US 101. The California Highway Patrol is responsible for hazardous materials accidents on the Highway. The City maintains communication links with these agencies and participates, as necessary, in responses to hazardous materials accidents.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Sonoma Life Support provides ambulance service in Rohnert Park. Sonoma Life Support is a private emergency medical provider that was granted the contract to provide emergency services for the central Sonoma County Franchise area in 1991. The purpose of the franchise is to provide emergency medical services to all sectors of the population regardless of ability to pay, support the system through fees and minimize cost through public regulation of the service provider. Sonoma County monitors the service provider, ensuring that Sonoma Life Support maintains the required service levels.

A single ambulance station serves the City of Rohnert Park. The station is housed in leased space generally located near the center of the city. Units located elsewhere in the county provide backup service as needed. A paramedic and other necessary staff at all times staff the station. Emergency services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The ambulance contains full communications including radio and phone linking the ambulance with the Santa Rosa and Petaluma hospitals.

POLICE, FIRE, AND RELATED SERVICES

DPS provides police, fire, and related services in the community according to the public safety administrative concept. Cross-trained personnel under a single administrative umbrella furnish police and fire services.

Key procedures help implement the public safety concept in Rohnert Park. First, DPS personnel are issued personal pagers and home alert devices. This allows personnel to be contacted by dispatchers in cases when additional staff is needed during an emergency. Second, public safety officers must live within a reasonable proximity to the community. Third, the City issues vehicles to officers. The vehicles are parked at officers' homes during off-duty hours. Officers carry fire turnout gear, water and dry chemical fire extinguishers, emergency medical, and other items in their vehicle.

GOALS: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

HS-I Use the Standardized Emergency Management Plan as the guide for emergency management in Rohnert Park.

HS-J Cooperate with other public agencies to store, organize, distribute, and administer emergency medical equipment, supplies, services and communication systems.

HS-K As part of the concurrency requirement for development on the westside, construct a public safety station west of US 101 in the general vicinity of the Wilfred Avenue/Labath Avenue intersection.

A Westside station will be necessary if additional construction occurs west of US 101 in order to respond to emergency calls within an acceptable response time. If the station were located in the general vicinity of the Wilfred Avenue/Labath Avenue intersection, emergency vehicles could respond within four minutes to calls in the area west of US 101.

POLICIES: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

HS-21 Maintain and regularly update the Standardized Emergency Management Plan.

The Department of Public safety shall administer the plan and revise it as needed. Evacuation routes should be adopted and updated as part of the plan. The routes should be flexible to respond appropriately to various emergencies (such as exposure to hazardous materials, flood, fire, or earthquake).

HS-22 Conduct periodic emergency management exercises to familiarize key City personnel and surrounding jurisdictions and agencies with their roles and responsibilities to ensure emergency facilities will function in the event of a disaster.

HS-23 Prepare and disseminate information to help households prepare for emergency situations.

This information should include pre-fire and earthquake plans, guidebooks, and instruction kits identifying how emergency response will be coordinated and how evacuation of residents will proceed. Households should be encouraged to take the necessary preparations to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours after a disaster strikes the community.

HS-24 Require adequate access for emergency vehicles, including adequate street width and vertical clearance, on new streets.

The DPS should establish street width, vertical clearance, and access standards in the Standardized Emergency Management Plan.

HS-25 Ensure that new traffic signals include a system which allows emergency vehicles to change the signal.

HS-26 Locate a new public safety station in the Northwest Specific Plan Area; require new development in the northwest (north of Business Park Drive and West of Highway 101) to contribute funds to the Public Facilities Financing Plan for construction.

The Wilfred-Dowdell Village Specific Plan establishes a Public Facilities Financing Plan to provide funding for a new station. The Wilfred-Dowdell Village development is providing a portion of the total funding required; other development benefiting from the station will also be required to contribute. The new station on the westside is expected to require seven additional public safety staff, whose salaries would be provided through the General Fund.

8 Noise

California Government Code § 65302(f) requires that each general plan have a noise element. The purpose of the element is to identify existing noise problems in the community and to provide guidance to planners and developers for avoiding future problems.

8.1 NOISE CHARACTERISTICS

Noise can be defined as a sound or series of sounds that are intrusive, irritating, objectionable and/or disruptive to sleep, speech, and other activity. The known effects of noise on humans include hearing loss, communication interference, sleep interference, physiological responses, and annoyance. Generally, residential and public uses are more noise-sensitive than commercial and industrial uses.

THRESHOLDS AND STANDARDS

Reported noise levels are expressed as a function of time (because noise varies over time) and time of day (because people are more sensitive to nighttime than daytime noise). Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and Day-Night Noise Level (Ldn) both reflect noise exposure over an average day, with weighting to reflect nighttime sensitivity. Ldn is commonly used for measuring community noise levels, although CNEL is used to measure aircraft noise levels, in conjunction with State standards. The following are generally accepted thresholds of noise interference:

- *Speech Interference*. Thresholds for speech interference indoors are about 45 dB if the noise is steady and above 55 dB if the noise is fluctuating. Outdoors, the thresholds are about 15 dB higher.
- *Sleep Interference*. Steady noise above 35 dB and fluctuating noise levels above about 45 dB may affect sleep.

Interior residential standards for multi-family dwellings are set by the State of California at 45 dB Ldn. The standard is designed for sleep and speech protection and most jurisdictions apply the same criterion for all residential uses.

STRUCTURAL ATTENUATION

With open windows, typical structural attenuation is 12-17 dB; with closed windows, attenuation is 20 dB for older structures and 25 dB for newer structures. Special glass or double-paned windows can provide additional attenuation.

8.2 NOISE IN ROHNERT PARK

The major source of noise in Rohnert Park is traffic along major roadways. US 101, Rohnert Park Expressway, Snyder Lane, Southwest Boulevard, East Cotati Avenue, and Golf Course Drive have been identified as the major sources of roadway traffic noise. A secondary source of noise is the railroad which traverses the city.

1997 CONDITIONS

In 1997, traffic noise levels in Rohnert Park were calculated using the Federal Highway Administration's noise prediction model (FHWA-RD-77-108) and the California Vehicle Noise Emission Levels model, developed by Caltrans. The results are shown in Table 8.3-1. Only the roadways that would generate a 60 dB Ldn beyond a distance of 50 feet from the roadway centerline are listed. Because of minimal development in the city and few changes in traffic patterns or distribution, noise conditions did not go through any perceptible changes between 1997 and 1999.

Regular rail service along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) Railroad right-of-way was interrupted in 1998 due to stormwater damage. As of 1999, limited rail service was resumed. The NP Railroad operates about one train per day and one train every other night through Rohnert Park. Rail operations result in noise levels in excess of 69 dB Ldn up to 100 feet from the tracks and in excess of 60 dB Ldn up to 300 feet from the tracks.

The Sonoma Airport (12 miles northeast of Rohnert Park) and Petaluma Airport (8 miles southeast of Rohnert Park) impose no appreciable noise impacts on the city. Aircraft from the two airports reach an altitude of more than 1,000 feet when flying over Rohnert Park.

Table 8.2-1:
1997 Estimated Traffic Noise Levels in Rohnert Park

	Peak-Hour Traffic Volume	*Average Speed (mph)*	*Noise Level at 100 feet (Ldn)*
US 101			
No Sound Wall	7,000	65	77
Behind Sound Wall or Structures (estimate)	7,000	65	72
Petaluma Hill Rd			
Keiser Rd – Crane Canyon Rd	1,500	50	68
Keiser Rd – Railroad Ave	2,000	50	70
Snyder Lane	1,100	35	60
Country Club Dr	1,000	25	57
State Farm Dr	900	35	59
Commerce Dr			
Rohnert Park Expwy – Golf Course Dr	1,000	30	58

Table 8.2-1:
1997 Estimated Traffic Noise Levels in Rohnert Park

	Peak-Hour Traffic Volume	*Average Speed (mph)*	*Noise Level at 100 feet (Ldn)*
Rohnert Park Expwy – Old Redwood Highway	1,300	30	59
Redwood Dr			
Commerce Dr – Wilfred Ave	1,600	35	61
Wilfred Avenue – Rohnert Park Expwy	1,000	35	60
Rohnert Park Expwy – SR 116	900	35	59
Stony Point Rd			
Millbrae Ave – Rohnert Park Expwy	1,300	35	61
Rohnert Park Expwy – SR 116	1,100	35	60
Golf Course Dr			
Commerce Dr – Fairway Dr	1,500	35	61
Fairway Dr – Country Club Dr	1,200	35	60
Country Club Dr – Snyder Ln	900	35	58
Rohnert Park Expwy			
Stony Point Rd – Business Park Dr	900	35	59
Business Park Dr – US 101	1,700	35	62
at US 101	2,500	35	63
US 101 – Country Club Dr	2,200	35	62
Country Club Dr – Snyder Ln	1,300	35	60
Snyder Ln – Rohnert Park Expwy	700	35	58
Enterprise Dr	700	30	58
Southwest Blvd	1,000	35	60
East Cotati Avenue	1,100	35	60
East Cotati Avenue	1,100	35	60

Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Acoustical Engineers

PROJECTED CONDITIONS UNDER GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT

Estimates of roadway noise levels under General Plan buildout were based on projected traffic volumes and speeds, as documented in Chapter 4: Transportation. The noise analysis also takes into account the new roadways planned for the eastside, westside, Canon Manor, and southeast areas, as shown in Figure 4.1-1. Perceptible noise increases (3 dB or more) resulting from traffic under General Plan buildout are listed in Table 8.2-2. Noise contours are shown in Figure 8.2-1.

Figure 8.2-1

Noise Contours under General Plan Buildout

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Table 8.2-2:
Projected Traffic Noise Level Increases[1]

Affected Roadway Segments	*Existing Noise Level at 100 ft. (Ldn)*	*Predicted Noise Level at 100 ft. (Ldn)*
Snyder Ln	60 dB	63 dB
Redwood Dr: Rohnert Park Expwy – SR 116	59 dB	64 dB
Wilfred Ave: Stony Point Rd – Labath Ave	56 dB	61 dB
Wilfred Ave: Labath Ave – Redwood Dr	57 dB	67 dB
Keiser Rd: Snyder Ln – Petaluma Hill Rd	55 dB	63 dB
Rohnert Park Expwy: Snyder Ln – Petaluma Hill Rd	58 dB	61 dB
Southwest Blvd: Commerce Dr – Snyder Ln	60 dB	63 dB
East Cotati Ave: Snyder Ln – Bodway Pkwy	60 dB	64 dB
East Cotati Ave: Bodway Pkwy – Petaluma Hill Rd	59 dB	63 dB

1. Only roadway segments that would have a noise level of more than 60 dB Ldn at 100 feet from the roadway centerline are shown. New roadways and extensions (Labath Avenue, Sturdevant Drive, New Linear Park Road, and Eleanor Avenue) would all have noise levels below 60 dB at 100 feet from the centerline.

Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Acoustical Engineers

Most new roadway segments are predicted to have noise levels less than 60 dB Ldn at a distance of about 100 feet, with the exception of the two new US 101 crossings at Wilfred Avenue and State Farm Drive. Noise levels resulting from traffic along the two new highway crossings will be dominated by noise generated by US 101. Areas along new roadways on the eastside would have noise levels between 60 and 65 dB Ldn, as shown on Figure 8.2-1.

If train activity along the NP Railroad right-of-way is increased, noise-sensitive land uses in proximity to the line could be exposed to excessive noise levels. Noise levels along the route would depend on the type of train vehicle and track improvements, the frequency of trains, and the location of stations. North of the Rohnert Park Expressway, residential uses are set back from the rail line, but south of the Expressway, residential abut the right-of-way and would be subject to noise impacts.

8.3 NOISE GOALS AND POLICIES

GOALS: NOISE

NS-A Protect public health and welfare by eliminating or minimizing excessive noise levels.

NS-B Minimize the exposure of noise-sensitive uses—including residences, schools, churches, hospitals, and other public uses—to excessive noise levels.

POLICIES: NOISE

Standards

NS-1 During project review and approval, use Figure 8.3-1 to determine acceptable uses and analysis and insulation requirements in noise-impacted areas.

Figure 8.3-1 is based on land use and noise exposure compatibility levels in Appendix A of the State of California General Plan Guidelines. The table is consistent with the provision of State law that requires special noise insulation for new multifamily housing units within 60 dB Ldn noise exposure contours.

The table's land use categories do not correspond to the use classifications on the General Plan Land Use Diagram, but to actual uses in development projects. The land use categories shall be consistent with use definitions in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

The General Plan Land Use Diagram was designed to locate noise-sensitive land uses, like residential, as far away from major noise generators as possible. The city's largest noise generator is US 101, where roadside noise levels exceed 70 dB Ldn.

NS-2 For all residential uses, establish 45 dB Ldn as the standard for interior noise levels and 60 dB Ldn as the standard for exterior noise levels. Require appropriate siting of residential uses and/or mitigation measures to meet the standards.

Figure 8.3-1 requires special insulation for residential and other uses within 60 dB Ldn noise contours. Residential uses shall be required to meet the 45 dB Ldn interior noise level performance standard as well.

The policy for exterior noise level is intended to protect the enjoyment of open space in residential areas. Also, it helps protect interior noise levels when windows are open. Buildings with open windows attenuate about 12-17 dB CNEL. Within 60 dB Ldn contours, residences with open windows would experience 43-48 dB Ldn interior noise levels, near the threshold of speech interference (45 dB Ldn).

Noise Reduction

NS-3 Update the Noise Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance to require control of noise at the source through site design, building design, buffering, hours of operation, and other regulations, for any noise-emitting use.

The City's Noise Ordinance establishes noise standards for various noise-emitting land uses and for zoning districts. In addition, the ordinance restricts noise emitted from temporary or intermittent uses.

NS-4 Continue to require control of noise or mitigation measures for any noise-emitting construction equipment or activity.

The City's Noise Ordinance establishes controls on construction-related noise.

NS-5 Continue to work with County, State, and other agencies to reduce noise from sources outside the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) and to minimize impacts on sites within the SOI.

Mitigation of Noise Impacts

NS-6 Require buffers or site planning techniques for all new development within 65 dB Ldn noise contours. However, avoid visible sound walls except along US 101 and along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) Railroad right-of-way.

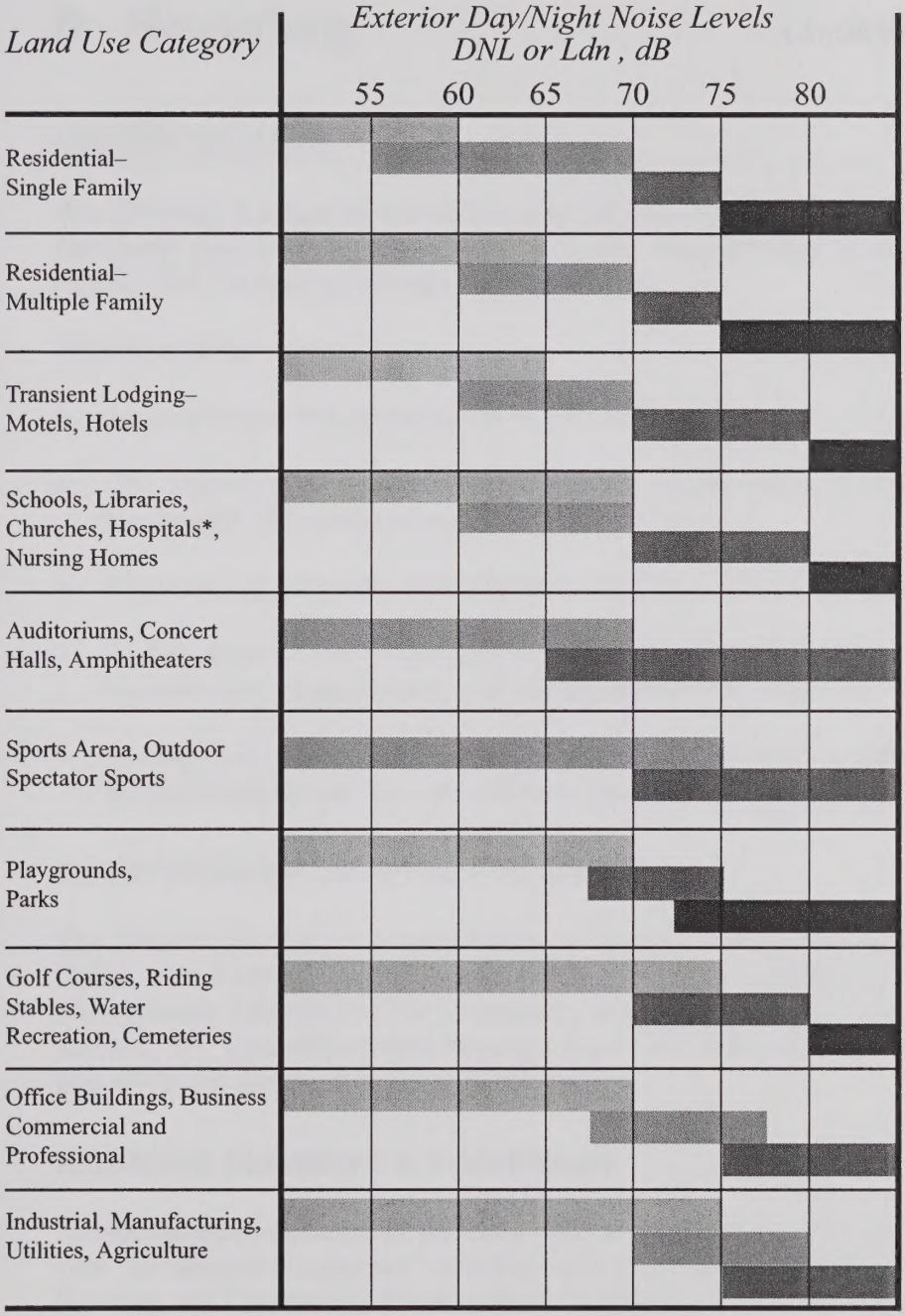
Chapter 3: Community Design includes policies to minimize use of sound walls.

NS-7 Require new development within existing or projected 65 dB Ldn noise contours to undergo a technical acoustical analysis, which shall serve as the basis for designing mitigation measures. Require the technical analysis to be conducted by a professional acoustical engineer.

This policy applies to both residential and non-residential uses. The technical analysis should determine the relative effectiveness of alternative mitigation.

NS-8 Work with SCTA to identify potential noise impacts resulting from commuter rail service along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) right-of-way and develop adequate mitigation measures.

Policy TR-33 in the Transportation Element encourages SCTA to continue in its efforts to develop commuter rail service along the NP right-of-way.



INTERPRETATION

Normally Acceptable:
Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements

Conditionally Acceptable:
New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

Normally Unacceptable:
New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

Clearly Unacceptable:
New construction or development clearly should not be undertaken.

Source: Office of Planning and Research, State of California General Plan Guidelines, Appendix A: Guidelines for the Preparation and Content of the Noise Element of the General Plan, 1998.

*Because hospitals are often designed and constructed with high noise insulation properties, it is possible for them to be satisfactorily located in noisier areas.

Figure 8.3-1

Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments

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9 Housing

INTRODUCTION

The Housing Element is one of the general plan elements required by state law. This element has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of California Government Code Article 10.6 (commencing with Section 65580).

This element contains:

- An assessment of housing needs in the City,
- The identification of constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing for all income levels,
- An inventory of resources available to the City to meet these needs,
- A statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies related to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing, and,
- A seven and one-half year schedule of actions the City is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives of the Housing Element.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS

The Housing Element was prepared as an integral part of the revised Draft General Plan (May 2000). The General Plan Diagram and the policies contained in the Land Use and Growth Management Element and the Community Design Elements were used to determine the location, amount, and type of potential housing. The Plan's other elements were used to identify factors that affect the timing of housing development.

HOUSING ELEMENT'S TIMEFRAME

Unlike the other elements of the General Plan, the Housing Element's timeframe is tied to a five-year "housing needs process" schedule set by the State. Typically, the State orders the California Housing and Community Development Department to provide a determination of each region's share of the state housing need. This requirement has been suspended for a number of years, and the Bay Area's last Housing Needs Determination occurred ten years ago.

In 1999, the State initiated a housing needs process for the Bay Area that covers January 1, 1999 – June 30, 2006. Therefore, this Housing Element's timeframe is consistent with that period.

DATA SOURCES

The most current housing data and information available was used during the preparation of the Housing Element. Unfortunately, the most recent version of the United States Census, which is a primary source of housing information, is 1990. The results of Census 2000 will not be available until 2002, at which time the Element could be updated.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

An extensive community outreach effort accompanied the preparation of the General Plan. Flyers were sent to all mailing addresses in the City, announcing workshops pertaining to the General Plan update. Significant media contact, banners at public buildings, and other outreach efforts were conducted to publicize the importance of widespread public participation.

In addition to numerous workshops, invitations to sounding board sessions were mailed to approximately 800 randomly-selected addresses within the city limits. Fifty-seven people attended one of ten, two-hour meetings that were held over a period of two weeks. Representatives of for-profit and non-profit groups also provided input through public testimony and written comments.

Input on housing issues and potential housing actions was also received from the 1997 Rohnert Park Community Summit, which brought together many of the community's leaders and citizens. A housing task force was formed to research, discuss, and recommend courses of action regarding housing issues.

9.1 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

STATEWIDE HOUSING NEEDS

A recent publication[1] of the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), identifies the following statewide housing needs:

- Much higher levels of housing construction are needed to adequately house the state's population.
- High housing cost burdens are increasingly an issue for both owners and renters. The combination of upward price pressure in the housing market and relatively tight urban housing markets has led to increasing cost burdens, particularly for low-income renter residents.
- In addition to high housing cost burdens, in some portions of the state, the level of overcrowding has dramatically increased.
- A substantial portion of affordable rental housing developments statewide are at risk of conversion to market rate use. This situation threatens thousands of low-income elderly households and families, exacerbating local housing needs.
- California has an extensive agricultural economy that depends on temporary workers to harvest and process crops. Significant numbers of these critical workers migrate throughout the state, facing housing challenges that impact their welfare.
- The homeless individuals and households who have fallen through the cracks of society face significant difficulties in obtaining shelter and reintegrating themselves into the broader society.

Other housing concerns observed by HCD officials[2] include:

- Lower-income households are paying more than 50% of their income towards housing costs, thus creating problems related to mobility, health care, food, and other essential needs.
- California has the third-lowest home ownership rate in the country.

Many of these statewide housing concerns face the City of Rohnert Park and are discussed and addressed in this element.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Rohnert Park's housing market has undergone significant changes since the first homes were built. In 1962 when the City incorporated as a general law city, only 903 dwelling units existed. In the early 60's and 70's, the primary market was single-family detached housing units and mobilehome parks. Such housing was affordable by a great majority of residents and families moving into the area.

Much of the city has been developed using a neighborhood concept in accordance with a master plan. Each neighborhood area includes single-family and multi-family housing types arranged around a school and park. Shopping centers have been designed to be within convenient walking distance from local neighborhoods.

During the 1970s, increasing numbers of apartments, townhouses, condominiums, and mobilehomes were added to the city's housing inventory as lower-cost alternatives to single-family housing. The 1980s saw continued strong development of single-family housing as well as numerous apartment projects. The city's housing stock increased by more than 55% during this decade.

During the 1990s, the City saw its tallest residential building constructed, a four-story elderly housing project, and the development of numerous other housing units for lower-income households. Development of large custom homes occurred at the north end of the city. No additional mobilehome parks were developed during this period.

Table 9.1-1
Rohnert Park Dwelling Units, 1980 – 2000

Housing Type	1980	1990	2000
Single-family	4,819	8,143	8,960
Multi-family	2,837	4,306	5,020
Mobilehomes/travel trailers	1,299	1,466	1,467
Total	**8,955**	**13,915**	**15,447**

Sources: U.S.Census, California Department of Finance

At the beginning of 2000, the City had approximately 15,447 dwelling units that provided a diverse range of accommodations for owners and renters. Nearly half of the city's homes were single-family detached units (Table 9.1-2). Multi-family units (two or more units in structure) comprised one-third of the housing stock.

Compared to the types of housing in Sonoma County and California, the city's housing distribution is characterized by:

- A lower percentage of single-family detached units than the county
- A higher percentage of single-family attached units than both the county and state
- A significantly higher proportion of multi-family units than the county
- A slightly higher proportion of mobilehomes than both the county and state

Table 9.1-2
Housing Distribution Comparison, 2000

Housing Type	No. of Units	Distribution		
		City	County	State
Single-family				
detached	7,241	47%	68%	56%
attached	1,719	11%	7%	7%
Multi-family				
2 – 4 units in structure	1,048	7%	6%	8%
≥5 units in structure	3,972	26%	6%	24%
Mobilehomes	1,467	9%	7%	5%

Source: California State Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, May 2000

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Housing Conditions Survey

In November 1999, a visual inspection was made of the older neighborhoods in Rohnert Park, including Sections A, B, C, E, and L, as well as all five of the mobilehome parks. A total of 2,898 conventionally-constructed residences and 1,466 mobilehome units were visually surveyed.

The condition of each housing unit was classified utilizing the following definitions:

Sound: A structure providing safe, sanitary and adequate housing. The structure shows no visible damage and exhibits the appearance of regular maintenance. Small areas of peeling paint, untended fences, or unkempt landscaping may be included in a sound rating.

Sound Deficient: A structure providing safe, sanitary and adequate housing but shows two or more deficiencies which if unrepaired may lead to structure deterioration. Deficiencies include broken windows, large areas of peeling paint, large driveway cracks, missing shingles, and deteriorating fencing.

Deteriorating: A structure that does not provide safe, sanitary and adequate housing but could if rehabilitated. The structure exhibits a combination of major defects and deficiencies that indicate a prolonged absence of regular maintenance or inadequate original construction. Examples include several broken and/or boarded windows, large areas of missing roof shingles, holes or cracks in the walls and/or foundation, sagging porch and/or roof lines, missing or damaged doors, inadequate additions and inadequate original construction.

Dilapidated: A structure that has deteriorated past the point of economical rehabilitation, is unsafe, unsanitary, and inadequate housing. The structure exhibits a majority of major defects and deficiencies including a severely damaged foundation,

roof, and/or porch line, large holes in walls and roof, missing or broken windows and doors, severely peeling paint, an unpaved pitted and rutted driveway, inadequate additions, and inadequate original construction.

The overwhelming majority of units surveyed were found to be in "sound" condition, with the appearance of regular maintenance of the home and landscaping. Many homes had been renovated with new roofs, windows, or additions, or were in the process of renovation. The only deficiencies identified were minimal painting needs (e.g., trim), clean-up of limited outdoor storage (e.g., a pile of construction materials), replacement of garage doors, and resealing of cracked driveways. The city's mobilehomes were also found to be well-maintained.

Only 14 homes were identified by the survey as being "sound deficient," with junk- or trash-filled yards, a broken window, large areas of peeling paint, substantially cracked driveways, and/or deteriorating fencing. In all cases, it appeared that a nominal amount of work would correct all of the deficiencies.

Not surprisingly, most of the identified maintenance situations occur in the "A" and "B" Sections of the City, the oldest neighborhoods. No mobilehomes were identified as being deficient.

It should be noted that the housing conditions survey was only an exterior visual inspection, and it is likely that many of the older homes are in need of such maintenance as new roofs and heating systems, as well as such energy-saving measures as insulation, double-pane windows, and weather-stripping. These conditions could only be identified by a thorough on-site inspection.

Soils in the Rohnert Park area have a high shrink/swell characteristic. These soil conditions have been a contributing factor in cracking in foundations, slabs, driveways, and walkways.

The 152 travel trailers located in the Sonoma Grove Travel Trailer Park provide a form of very low-cost housing. Because maintenance of the park is regulated and enforced by the State of California, the trailers were not inspected during the housing conditions survey. Although travel trailers are not designed for use as permanent housing, the park's trailers are occupied as such. This is the only violation of state housing codes that exists, according to the state park inspector[3].

Housing Maintenance

The generally well-maintained conditions and presence of home improvements are evidence of a move towards conserving the City's existing units in the face of limited housing development. A gentrification process may also be underway, as families find these neighborhoods to be the only ones within their financial grasp. Based on listing prices for homes in the older neighborhoods, they are within the affordability range of moderate-income households. For example, two three-bedroom, two-bath homes at the end of 1999 were offered for sale in the "A" Section at $204,950 and $214,950[4]. Similar prices could be found in the "E" Section ($219,900) and the "L" Section ($217,500).

The apparent rise in home maintenance levels is borne out in the comparison of the 1999 housing conditions survey results, which identified 14 homes as being "Sound Deficient" with those of previous surveys in 1981 and 1989. In 1981, 50 homes were found to be "Sound Deficient," a number that had risen to 68 in 1989, along with four homes being identified as "Deteriorating."

Potential Natural Disaster Impacts

The City of Rohnert Park would be subjected to very high levels of shaking in the event of a magnitude 7.1 earthquake on the Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek fault. In such an event, the Association of Bay Area Governments estimates that at least 13,669 dwelling units in Sonoma County would be uninhabitable[5].

More than half of the "red-tagged" units is anticipated to be mobilehomes, which tend to sustain greater damage from equivalent intensities of shaking than wood-frame buildings. During an earthquake, the jacks on which a coach is typically placed will tip, causing the coach to fall off some or all of its supports. Although the jacks may punch holes through the floor of the coach, it is usually relatively undamaged. Despite the minimal damage, however, the mobilehome becomes uninhabitable, as it must be returned to its foundation, leveled again, and reconnected to utilities.

Although single-family, wood-framed homes are less likely to be red-tagged, significant damage can occur from falling hot water heaters, failed cripple walls, falling unreinforced masonry chimneys, and dislocation of structures from their foundations. Two-story homes with living space over garages are particularly vulnerable to damage.

Similarly, multi-family wood-framed buildings may have living areas above parking areas, supported only by posts. The "soft" first story may also be constructed of concrete masonry unit bearing walls. These designs offer little resistance to lateral seismic forces. The city's building official has identified 30 to 40 multi-family units in four buildings with ground floor parking that could be highly susceptible to seismic damage.

The Rohnert Park Community Development Commission (CDCRP) recently completed the installation of earthquake-resistant bracing systems in more than 474 mobilehomes, which represent nearly one-third of the 1,466 mobilehomes within the city. Additional efforts are needed to protect the remaining units.

Fair Housing

According to a local representative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)[6], not more than a dozen fair housing complaints were received by HUD from Rohnert Park residents over the past year. Actual complaints typically represent only 10 percent of all fair housing violations, however.

Fair Housing of Sonoma County (FHOSC) reports receiving seven fair housing-related complaints during the nine months in 1999 that the agency was operational. Three of the complaints were related to discrimination against families with children, and there was one

complaint for each of the following types of discrimination: disability, race, marital status, and national origin[7].

A 1999 FHOSC audit[8] tested 60 Sonoma County apartment complexes representing 900 units of rental housing to identify the existence of differential treatment of families with children. The audit concluded that such families can expect to experience discrimination 20% of the time. However, none of the nine Rohnert Park rental complexes tested by FHOSC were identified as treating potential tenants with children differently from those without.

City Fair Housing Practices

Existing fair housing practices of the City of Rohnert Park include:

- Reviewing the fair housing records and practices of agencies and firms during contract negotiations, and including provisions in contracts allowing city inspection of fair housing documentation.

- Including fair housing practices among the items addressed by the CDCRP's auditor during annual visits to the sites of contracting agencies and firms. CDCRP staff also conducts occasional site visits and program audits of agency contractors; fair housing and discrimination compliance is one purpose of such inspections.

- The dissemination of fair housing information through mailings to all city households, phone requests, posters in public locations, and referrals to Sonoma County Rental Information and Mediation Services.

- Monitoring the occupancy characteristics of housing projects targeted towards lower-income households to ensure that minorities, families, and the disabled are fairly represented. For example, a recent resident profile from the 50-unit Tower Apartments project reported that 67 percent of its residents were white (compared to a 1990 census level of 82 percent), 15 percent were black (3 percent census figure), and 15 percent were Hispanic (7 percent census figure). Six of the 75 adults were classified as disabled. An annual report of program data is made to the CDCRP.

- Monitoring the racial and ethnic characteristics of loan recipients in city-supported projects and programs to promote equal representation and discourage discrimination or restrictions in housing choice.

- Requiring contractors to file monthly or annual progress reports that include information on program beneficiaries. Fair housing and discrimination compliance are reviewed when these reports are examined.

- Adopting the Uniform Housing Code standards for maximum occupancy of dwelling units, which has no limit on the number of residents in a dwelling unit, as long as minimum floor area requirements are met.

- Providing equitable public services throughout the City, including public transportation, crime prevention, police protection, street lighting, street cleaning, trash collection,

recreational facilities and programs, and schools; and providing for the development of commercial centers in all neighborhoods

- Publicizing openings on city boards and commissions through several newspapers.
- Ensuring that an over-concentration of lower-income housing does not occur in neighborhoods.
- Encouraging the provision of a full array of banking services in convenient locations throughout the City.
- Promoting the provision of housing affordable to lower-income households, which affirmatively furthers fair housing because minority families and persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among those that would benefit from low-cost housing.

HOUSING SUPPLY

An insufficient supply of housing can occur when household formation increases at a more rapid pace than housing construction, and can lead to high housing costs, overcrowded living conditions, gentrification pressure on existing housing, and difficulty in finding suitable housing.

In Sonoma County, the demand for housing is also affected by job growth related to the expansion of local companies and the establishment of new businesses that bring in large numbers of out-of-area buyers. This demand is in addition to the normal need for housing associated with the formation of new households through children leaving home, marriage, and divorce.

Housing Availability

At the beginning of 2000, approximately 3.6% of housing units in the City were vacant according to the California Department of Finance (DOF). (The City's vacancy rate has ranged from 3.63% to 4.02% over the last ten years.) This rate was less than half of the county's and state's average 7.3% vacancy rate reported by DOF. It is also substantially lower than the 5.1% level that HCD finds is needed to allow adequate mobility within the housing market.

Rental Housing

There are indications that the vacancy rate decreased significantly during 1999. At the end of the third quarter in 1999, there were fewer than two vacancies for every 100 apartments in Sonoma County[9]. Just six months earlier, the vacancy rate was almost twice that. In Rohnert Park, there were only three vacancies among the 2,298 apartment units surveyed. In a balanced market, there would be five vacancies per 100 apartments.

Rental opportunities for single-family homes are even tighter because many owners of single-family rentals have decided to take advantage of today's strong purchase market – where prices are up 20 percent in two years – and sell.

Ownership Housing

A major element of the American dream is a home of one's own in the neighborhood of one's choice. Owning a home is one of the primary ways of accumulating wealth in our society, a form of wealth acquisition that is especially protected in the U.S. tax code. Homeownership stabilizes housing costs for a family and protects them from the variations that occur in rental housing.

Being a homeowner is also known to increase people's feelings of control over their lives and their sense of overall well-being. High rates of homeownership are believed to strengthen neighborhoods as well, by increasing residents' stake in the future of their communities[10].

The 1990 Census reported that 56 percent of the city's units were owner-occupied, an ownership level that was somewhat lower than the County's 63 percent. This finding is consistent with the city's higher proportion of multi-family housing.

At the end of 1999, there was a scarcity of homes for sale throughout Sonoma County. Overall, the county had a 1.7-month supply on hand at the end of November 1999 – the first time during the 1990s that the supply of resale housing dropped below two months[11]. This inventory was far below the five- to seven-month supply of homes that is considered a "balanced" market that places buyers and sellers on equal footing. At the lower end of the price range, there was less than a one-month supply.

Condominiums are becoming a choice for first-time buyers as a result of the tight single-family housing market. But with increasing demand, the condominium market is even tighter than single-family homes, with only 28 condominiums on hand at the end of 1999 in the entire county.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing cost is generally the greatest single expense item for households. For owner households, housing expenses consist of mortgage and interest payments, insurance, maintenance, and property taxes. For renter households, housing expenses consist of rent and utilities.

Higher-income households may choose to spend greater portions of their income for housing expenses. However, many low-income households must involuntarily spend a large share of their income on housing.

The housing cost burden for recent home purchasers is even greater than that of all homeowners on average, since the relative cost of homeownership decreases over time (long-

term owner costs do not adjust to the market value of housing). This situation exists despite the fact that the median income for recent purchasers has generally risen[12].

Housing Prices and Rents

Housing Prices

The 1990 median value of Rohnert Park homes, $185,000, was the fourth-lowest of the nine cities in Sonoma County, and was also lower than the state's or county's median value ($194,300 and $200,600, respectively).

By April 2000, however, the median housing price (based on condominium and single-family home resales) in the Rohnert Park/Cotati/Penngrove areas was $275,475, significantly exceeding the California median price of $241,600. However, it was still lower than the $290,000 county median housing resale price, and the $469,250 Bay Area median price[13].

A study by the National Association of Home Builders[14] identified the Santa Rosa metropolitan area as the fifth least-affordable region for housing nationwide in the last quarter of 1999.

Bay Area inflation in 1999 grew at almost twice the U.S. rate, as surging housing prices drove the cost of living up, and exceeded the national rate for the third year in a row[15]. Home prices in the Bay Area increased by 6.0 percent and rent increased by 6.9 percent, compared to national increases of 2.4 and 3.0 percent, respectively.

A rise in the Bay Area's consumer price index can have a ripple effect through the housing market when landlords use it as a gauge to raise the rent. Rapid housing appreciation also impedes the "filtering" process through which new construction is purchased and occupied by residents of the existing housing stock, thereby freeing existing housing for purchasers at the lower end of the income scale.

The median Rohnert Park housing price saw a 13 percent increase between September 1998 and September 1999[16]. An even more striking example of the recent rapid increase in housing prices is the case of a three-bedroom home in the M Section that appreciated by $64,000 (35 percent) between February 1998 and August 1999[17].

The incremental rise in interest rates and consumer worries about the stock market may force a slight cooling in the housing market in 2000.

Rents

The average apartment rent in Sonoma County was up 11 percent in the 12 months ended September 30, 1999. Average monthly rent was $895, up from $808 a year earlier and $766 two years ago. Three-bedroom apartments averaged $1,227 (up $155 or 14.5 percent in the past year), two-bedroom units averaged $1,013 (up $88 or 9.6 percent), and one-bedrooms averaged $777 (up $70 or 10 percent)[19].

Because of the extremely low vacancy rate, landlords are able to rent their units for amounts that far exceed the "fair market rate" established by HUD. It is becoming common for landlords to increase rents more than once a year, in amounts of $50 or more[20].

In 1999, it was estimated that 38 percent of renters in Sonoma County were unable to afford the fair market rent for a one-bedroom apartment and 48 percent were unable to afford a two-bedroom unit. The fair market rate for one- and two-bedroom units required the expenditure of 46 percent and 59 percent, respectively, of a household's income. The hourly wage needed to afford a one-bedroom unit at fair market rent was $12.31, and $15.94 for a two-bedroom unit[21].

A recent survey[22] of 57 Sonoma County complexes that rent to lower-income households (a total of 3,500 apartments) found that the average wait to get into one of these complexes is more than two years, and some report up to a five-year waiting list. Some complexes have more than 300 applicants waiting for units.

Overpayment for Housing

The State of California considers a lower-income household that pays more than 25 percent of its income for housing to be living in unaffordable housing and "overpaying" for housing. Based on this standard and the most recent census data, roughly one-half of all Rohnert Park households overpaid for housing in 1990. Of households with incomes of less than 81 percent of the median income (total of 5,017), 90 percent overpaid for housing (2,133 owner households and 2,381 renter households).

A 30 percent housing expenditure standard is used by HUD. However, the 30 percent threshold is deceptive because, for many low-income families, spending 30 percent on housing costs leaves very little for other necessities, whereas for middle-income families, it is an appropriate expenditure level. Based on the 30 percent standard, roughly 42 percent of Rohnert Park households overpaid for housing in 1990.

HUD establishes annual income limits in various categories that are used in the administration of its programs. The 2000 HUD income limits for Sonoma County and its jurisdictions are shown in Table 9.1-3 and are based on a 2000 area median income of $58,100 for a family of four. The maximum monthly housing cost that households in each income category should bear has been calculated using a maximum expenditure of 30 percent of income for rent and utilities.

As shown in Table 9.1-4, many of the jobs in Rohnert Park and the region have salaries within the low-income range. These include jobs in the service sector, such as waiters, cooks, room cleaners, and food preparation workers; in the retail sector, such as sales clerks; and professional jobs such as accountants, librarians, and nurses. In many cases, even the combined wages of two working parents result in a lower-income household.

Over 5,000 applications for the Section 8 rental assistance program were received by the Sonoma County Housing Authority from low-income households during a five-week period in 1999. Of these applications, only 396 low-income households have been placed. Many of

the households waiting to receive assistance remain homeless or at risk, improperly housed, and under-served. Of these households, many are special needs groups, including, but not limited to the elderly, large families, and the disabled[23].

Table 9.1-3
HUD Income Limits, Sonoma County, March 2000; and Maximum Monthly Housing Costs

Household Size	Income Group Limits			
	Very Low (≤50% of AMI[1])	Low (51– 80% of AMI)	Median (100% of AMI)	Moderate (81–120% of AMI)
1 person				
Maximum Annual Income	$20,350	$32,550	$40,650	$48,800
Max. Monthly Housing Cost[2]	$509	$814	$1,018	$1,221
2 persons				
Maximum Annual Income	$23,250	$37,200	$46,500	$55,750
Max. Monthly Housing Cost	$581	$930	$1,163	$1,395
3 persons				
Maximum Annual Income	$26,150	$41,850	$52,300	$62,750
Max. Monthly Housing Cost	$654	$1,046	$1,308	$1,569
4 persons				
Maximum Annual Income	$29,050	$46,500	$58,100	$69,700
Max. Monthly Housing Cost	$726	$1,163	$1,453	$1,743
5 persons				
Maximum Annual Income	$31,350	$50,200	$62,750	$75,300
Max. Monthly Housing Cost	$784	$1,255	$1,568	$1,881
6 persons				
Maximum Annual Income	$33,700	$53,900	$67,400	$80,850
Max. Monthly Housing Cost	$843	$1,348	$1,685	$2,022

[1]Average monthly income level established annually by HUD

[2]Maximum monthly housing cost is based on the expenditure of 30% of income for rent and utilities.

Table 9.1-4
Examples of Wages for Lower-Income Occupations

Occupation	Hourly Wage[1]	Annual Income
Cashier	$7.65	$15,912
Food preparation worker	$7.88	$16,390
Stock clerk	$8.50	$17,680
Cook - restaurant	$9.00	$18,720
Travel agent	$9.11	$18,949
Salesperson	$9.50	$19,760
Groundskeeper	$9.75	$20,280
Teller	$9.80	$20,384
Assembler, fabricator	$10.00	$20,800
Emergency medical technician	$10.72	$22,298
General office clerk	$11.60	$24,128
Medical assistant	$11.99	$24,939
Secretary, general	$12.23	$25,438
Firefighter	$13.36	$38,904
Truck driver - heavy	$13.50	$28,080
Bookkeeper	$13.95	$29,016
Office manager	$14.38	$29,910
Writer, editor	$14.38	$29,910
Welder, cutter	$15.00	$31,200
Social worker	$15.34	$31,907
Teacher - elementary school	--	$32,000
Dental assistant	$16.00	$33,280
Licensed vocational nurse	$16.00	$33,280
Physical therapy assistant	$16.00	$33,280
Paralegal personnel	$17.26	$35,901
Drafter	$17.55	$36,504
Accountant	$18.22	$37,898
Machinist	$18.50	$38,480
Automotive mechanic	$19.38	$40,310
Registered nurse	$20.00	$41,600
Computer engineer, programmer	$21.00	$43,680

Source:, Occupational Outlook and Training Directory, Sonoma County 1998-1999, Sonoma County Human Services Department.
[1]Based on median pay after 3 years' experience

The Housing Authority administers the Section 8 program within the City of Rohnert Park. There are 347 of the city's households currently using the Section 8 program to help afford a residence. The program's waiting list includes 261 Rohnert Park households, most of whom are seniors or are disabled. A representative of the Housing Authority notes that it has become more difficult to find homes affordable to lower-income households in Rohnert Park

for holders of Section 8 certificates due to many homes being taken off the rental market and sold[24].

Approximately 340 Rohnert Park households were provided one-time assistance with rental deposits and monthly rents or mortgage payments over the last five years, an indication that a significant number of families are at risk of becoming homeless.

Overcrowding

High housing costs force lower-income households to share living accommodations with extended family and friends, or rent out rooms in their homes, leading to crowded living conditions. Large household sizes, multi-generational households, high numbers of children per household, low incomes, and the limited availability of large rental units all are related to overcrowding.

The 1990 Census reported that 536 (169 owner-occupied and 367 renter-occupied) of the City's occupied dwelling units had more than one person per room (excluding kitchens and bathrooms) and were therefore considered "overcrowded." These units represented 4 percent of total occupied units. Only 1.3 percent of the units were severely-overcrowded (over 1.5 persons per room). Renter-occupied units had a higher proportion of overcrowded and severely-overcrowded units (6 percent and 2.4 percent, respectively) than owner-occupied units (2.4 percent and .5 percent).

This level of overcrowding is significantly lower than that of California in 1990, which was 12.3 percent of total households. However, the higher incidence of overcrowding in renter households in Rohnert Park was consistent with that of the state's, with renters being three times more likely than owners to be overcrowded.

SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS

The special housing needs of certain persons and households are discussed in this section.

The Elderly

The 1990 Census reported 2,718 city residents age 65 or over (7.5 percent of the population), and 1,913 households headed by persons 65 and over. This proportion is significantly below those of other Sonoma County communities. Of the total elderly households, 1,365 were owner-occupied units (18.2 percent of all owner households) and 548 were renter households (9.2 percent of all renter households).

Existing Housing for the Elderly

Approximately one-half of senior households in Rohnert Park live in housing specifically designed for seniors, senior multi-family complexes, or mobilehome parks. Multi-family complexes in Rohnert Park that have been designed to meet the needs of the elderly include 205 market-rate units located in Pacific Springs, a comprehensive retirement complex, 230 subsidized units in the Altamont Senior Apartments, and 63 subsidized units for seniors at

Country Club Village. Out of 172 units at Copeland Creek Apartments, only 12 units are occupied by persons who are less than 65 years of age.

Of the five mobilehome parks in the city, three were designed and are operated to meet the needs of seniors and have a total of 720 spaces. The other two parks allow families but the majority of residents are also elderly. Mobilehomes meet the needs of many seniors because they provide an independent living environment with smaller yards and homes requiring lower levels of maintenance.

There are approximately six group care homes licensed in the City that can accommodate up to 28 elderly individuals, some of whom can be non-ambulatory or mentally-disordered.

Characteristics of Elderly Households

The majority of the elderly are on fixed incomes such as pensions, social security, and personal savings. Many elderly households pay an excessive proportion of their income for housing because their incomes are low. In 1990, twice as many elderly households in the city had incomes of less than $25,000 than Rohnert Park households as a whole. However, only 6 percent of residents over the age of 65 were living in poverty in 1990. Of these, 74% were elderly women.

Elderly homeowners often cannot afford maintenance and repairs because of their lower, fixed incomes. They may also not be able to afford modifications that are needed to their homes to ensure their safety and improve their mobility, such as grab bars and ramps.

Elderly Housing Needs

As citizens get older, their housing needs change. Special housing needs of the elderly include smaller and more efficient housing to minimize maintenance and barrier-free designs to accommodate restricted functions.

Many older persons own their homes and most prefer to remain there as they grow older[25]. Therefore, efforts are needed to help the elderly maintain independent life styles. In 1990, 815 elderly Rohnert Park residents were identified as having a mobility limitation. Housing locations near public transit are needed for senior citizens because they may not drive. The elderly need additional auxiliary services such as housecleaning, health care, and grocery delivery when illness and disability limit their capacity to fend for themselves.

House sharing can provide older homeowners with revenue, as well as added security and companionship, and provides renters with affordable housing. Accessory apartments, which are separate units within a home, offer the same advantages plus privacy.

As it becomes increasingly difficult for the elderly to live independently, there is a need for congregate or group housing that provides small individual units without kitchens or with minimal provision for cooking, and some common facilities and services, including shared arrangements for meals and housekeeping services. Congregate care housing is particularly

attractive to older persons, as building design and services can be tailored to their specific needs.

Life care facilities can also provide all levels of care on the same site to meet the progressively greater needs of the elderly. These facilities often have apartments, congregate housing, an infirmary, and nursing home in the same or adjacent buildings. Elderly persons buy into a life care project with an initial fee, then pay a monthly fee thereafter. The fee usually guarantees occupancy in a particular size of apartment and one meal a day. Tenants may also move into a "personal care" unit or nursing facility if health support needs change.

The Disabled

The 1990 Census reported 2,182 persons, 16 and older, with a mobility or self-care limitation living in Rohnert Park. Of this number, 932 (43 percent) were persons 65 years of age and older. These limitations may substantially restrict the disabled's ability to live in conventional housing.

The County Health Service Department, Mental Health Division, estimates that approximately 8,000 county residents have mental disabilities[26]. A specific estimate for Rohnert Park is not available. The Mental Health Division has identified the following housing needs of mentally-ill persons:

- Mentally ill adults need more supported housing options. The Hendley Circle model [Santa Rosa] has worked well. More of this type of housing is needed, particularly in the [county's] southern regions, including Rohnert Park and Sonoma.

- A recent development within the past few years is a crisis in residential care options for elderly persons living on Supplemental Security Income who have mental health problems. It is nearly impossible to find any residential care home that will accept low-income, elderly persons who have a mental health diagnosis.

- Duplex studio units, units that count as one unit but offer single-occupancy living spaces, are needed for this population.

Existing Housing for the Disabled

Muirfield Apartments, a 24-unit project completed in 1999, provides housing for people with developmental disabilities who are capable of living independently. The tenants will likely have jobs in the community and do their own cooking. The rents are subsidized through a project rental assistance contract with HUD, so the tenants only pay 30% of their income in order to live there. The project was facilitated by a $292,000 below-market interest rate loan from the CDCRP for pre-development costs and project development.

Additionally, eight units in The Gardens apartment project, constructed in 1995 with the assistance of the CDCRP, are fully handicapped-accessible.

There are approximately 15 licensed group homes in Rohnert Park for developmentally disabled adults that can accommodate up to 72 individuals.

State and Federal Requirements

In response to the serious lack of accessible housing in the United States, the Fair Housing Act requires that all ground floor dwelling units in buildings of four or more units without elevators and all dwelling units in elevator buildings of four or more units include the following basic features of accessible and adaptive design:

- Public and common areas must be accessible to persons with disabilities
- Doors and hallways must be wide enough for wheelchairs
- All units must have:
    - An accessible route into and through the unit
    - Accessible light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls
    - Reinforced bathroom walls to allow later installation of grab bars and
    - Kitchens and bathrooms that can be used by people in wheelchairs.

The Fair Housing requirements are included in California's Title 24 regulations, which are enforced by the city through its building codes, building plan review, and site inspections.

In the case of persons with a physical or mental disability (including hearing, mobility and visual impairments, chronic alcoholism, chronic mental illness, AIDS, AIDS Related Complex and mental retardation) that substantially limits one or more major life activities, landlords may not:

- Refuse to let tenants make reasonable modifications to their dwelling or common use areas, at their expense, if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing, or
- Refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing.

Disabled Housing Needs

Despite recent efforts by the City to assist in the construction of disabled-accessible housing, there continues to be a significant demand, especially at the lower-income levels, as evidenced by the high proportion of disabled persons on the waiting list for the Section 8 housing assistance program.

Besides the construction of new accessible housing, the needs of individuals with limitations can sometimes be met by simply retrofitting existing housing to transform conventional units into suitable housing. This is perhaps the least costly way in which to provide housing specifically for individuals with special limitations.

There is also a need to improve the "visitability" of housing to allow mobility-impaired residents to visit families and friends[27]. A visitable home provides less accessibility than an accessible home, and is meant to be those units not required to be accessible. Visitability means that:

- At least one entrance is at grade (no step) and can be approached by an accessible route, such as a sidewalk, and,
- The entrance door and all interior doors on the first floor are at least 34 inches wide, offering 32 inches of clear passage space.

A visitable home also serves persons without disabilities, such as a person pushing a stroller, a person delivering large appliances, or a person using a walker.

Large Families

Large families are defined by the Census as households with six or more members. In 1990, there were 488 such households, or 3.6 percent of all households in Rohnert Park. Of these, 351 large families lived in owner-occupied units, and 176 occupied rental units.

Lower-income, large households generally have difficulty locating appropriately-sized housing. A survey of market-rate rental projects conducted in 1994 by Burbank Housing Development Corporation found very few offering three-bedroom units, and none offering four-bedroom units. The Sonoma County Housing Authority's waiting lists show a significant number of "large families" waiting for rental assistance.

Whereas 72.4 percent of owner-occupied homes in 1990 contained three or more bedrooms, only 27.9 percent of renter-occupied homes were as large. Overall, owner-occupied units had one more bedroom, on average, than renter-occupied units.

The Gardens apartment project (1995) included four three-bedroom units and four four-bedroom units to help address the housing needs of large families.

Female-Headed Households

The 1990 Census documented 879 Rohnert Park families with minor children that were headed by a female with no husband present (17.9 percent of all families with minor children), contrasted with 236 families headed by a male with no wife present (4.7 percent).

More than 60 percent of all sub-families were female-headed (167 female-headed subfamilies); none of the sub-families was male-headed. Sub-families are defined as a second parent/child household living with another household.

The incomes of female-headed households were lower than those of other types of families, with a mean income of $21,775 compared to a mean income of $44,766 for all families with children. These families represented 44 percent of all families living below poverty level in 1989.

The incomes of 208 female-headed households (that contained a total of 376 children) were below the poverty level. Only 125 of the female heads of households were more than 65 years of age, and of this number, only nine were below the poverty level.

Since incomes of female-headed households are proportionately lower, their primary housing need is housing affordable to lower-income households.

Existing Housing for Single-Parent Households

Over the last few years, the CDCRP has purchased three four-bedroom/two-bath homes in Rohnert Park that are suitable for single-parent families. Up to four families share each house. The rent proceeds are used to maintain the homes and landscaping, and pay for utilities. All applicants are carefully screened before occupancy and are provided with living skills training and counseling.

The City also supported The Gardens, a 1995 project that targets lower-income families and, partly because of a request by the City, specifically accommodates single-parent households through a number of architectural features. The four-bedroom units are designed to facilitate shared rentals so that a single parent could arrange for live-in assistance with childcare from a relative, friend, student, or senior. The floor plans provide a separate downstairs bedroom for some separation from the upstairs bedroom suites. Even in the two-bedroom townhomes, there are generous separate living spaces to allow a single parent to create some "adult space." Additionally, the units incorporate a movable kitchen work island so that a parent can attend to childcare needs more readily while cooking[28].

Farmworkers

The 1990 Census reported that 258 city residents were employed in farming, forestry, and fishing; however it is not known how many of these, if any, were farmworkers.

ABAG's *Projections 2000* estimated that by the year 2005, there would be only 150 jobs related to agriculture and mining in the Rohnert Park subregional study area. This low number could reflect the fact that agricultural operations in the immediate vicinity of the City are generally limited to family-owned and operated farms centered on cattle grazing and hay growing that do not customarily require hired and temporary farm labor.

The subregional study area is much larger than the 1999 city limits. *Projections 2000* does not include an estimate for agricultural jobs within the City itself, but given the complete absence of land in agricultural production within the city limits, it can be assumed that there are no farmworker jobs and there will be none during the planning period.

However, farmworker housing remains a regional need, as described in the Sonoma County Consolidated Plan prepared by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission[29]:

> *Agriculture is an important industry in Sonoma County and farmworkers are an important part of the community. The California Human Development Corporation (CHDC), a nonprofit agency dedicated to bettering the lives of*

farmworkers and other low-income persons, reported that there are 4200 documented farmworker households in Sonoma County. Approximately 75% of farmworkers reported U. S. citizenship or permanent resident alien status. In addition, there is a seasonal migrant worker population. The majority of the migrant workers are young, single males traveling alone who are here for the harvest. Many of the migrant workers are here illegally.

According to the Sonoma County Housing Element, agricultural employment was the primary source of income for about 80% of the farmworker households. Farmworkers have a difficult time locating affordable housing in Sonoma County. Due to a combination of limited English language skills and low household incomes, the ability to obtain housing loans for home purchase is extremely limited. For the same reason, rentals are also very difficult to obtain.

More than one-half of the large family, farmworker households live in one or two bedroom units, resulting in overcrowding. Approximately 12% of these households have five or more members. The percentage of large families reported for farmworker households is five times the percentage of large families countywide. Much of the housing occupied by farmworker households is old and in need of repairs.

Another unique factor of the farming community is that most migrant farmworkers are single men who leave their families behind to work in the fields, and who have no adequate housing. These men live in fields, shacks, barns, or other unsuitable places. Although there is some overlap in many need areas, the housing needs of the migrant male differ markedly from the housing needs of farmworker families.

Providing affordable seasonal and year-round housing for farmworkers and migrant workers is a need in Sonoma County.

The Homeless

A person or family is considered homeless if they lack a fixed and regular night-time residence, or has a primary night-time residence that is a supervised publicly-operated shelter designated for providing temporary living accommodations, or is residing in a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings[30].

The Sonoma County Task Force on the Homeless reports that a majority of the homeless are county residents, rather than transients.

Characteristics of the Homeless

Reasons for homelessness in Sonoma County include[31]:

- The lack of permanent affordable housing
- The high cost of housing
- The large gap between housing costs and low wages
- A rental vacancy rate at or below 1%
- Personal emergencies
- Cutbacks in federal housing assistance
- Chronic substance abuse
- Insufficient support systems
- Spousal/partner abuse or abandonment
- Physical or mental illness
- A lack of life skills
- Loss of employment

Populations at risk of becoming homeless also include those living in subsidized housing units if their subsidies are discontinued, and those who have fixed or low incomes facing rent increases.

It is very difficult to reliably estimate the numbers of homeless. The 1990 Census listed 15 Rohnert Park citizens living in emergency shelters and identified two homeless persons on the street. There are a number of homeless individuals living in local motels.

Housing experts have determined that, on average, about one percent of a community's population may be homeless at some time during the year. Based on a population of about 40,000, approximately 400 people in Rohnert Park may become homeless during a year. These individuals and families may find temporary housing with friends and relatives, stay in a garage, camp out in their automobile, or stay in a shelter.

The *Sonoma County Consolidated Plan 2000* estimates the County's homeless population to be 8,215, which is almost evenly divided between individuals and families. This division significantly differed from the statewide homeless population, whose composition is closer to two-thirds individuals and one-third families.

Despite high levels of consumer confidence, booming technology stocks and general economic prosperity throughout the country, the number of homeless children today is higher than at any other time since the Great Depression. A 1999 report[32] found that families account for 38 percent of U.S. homeless, and children are the fastest-growing segment of the

homeless population. Consequently, the nationwide demand for emergency shelter by families with children has increased 50 percent since 1995 and 15 percent in 1999 alone.

It is estimated that the statewide housing need for homeless persons is divided among the following types of housing[33]:

- Emergency shelter need 27.4%
- Transitional housing need 35.0%
- Permanent housing need 37.7%

City Assistance for the Homeless

Although the City has contributed financially to the Armory Shelter Program in Santa Rosa, its efforts have focused primarily on preventing homelessness and providing transitional housing. It provides substantial support to such groups as Petaluma People Services, which provides one-time assistance with rental deposits and monthly rents or mortgage payments for those at risk of becoming homeless (assisting approximately 340 Rohnert Park households between 1995 and 1999).

The City also supports the Homeless Prevention Group, which provides one-time, interest-free loans to low-income households with adequate and stable sources of income who need assistance in emergency situations to prevent eviction from an established residence or have not accumulated enough funds to pay initial rental moving/move-in costs.

As previously mentioned, through an agreement with Committee on the Shelterless (COTS), the City has supported the purchase of three four-bedroom/two-bath homes in Rohnert Park to provide transitional housing for families who were at risk of becoming homeless. Up to four families share each house.

Transitional housing bridges the gap between homelessness and permanent housing. It is typically a temporary shared living environment with the provision of supportive services that are designed to help persons transitioning from homelessness to maintain stability and to prevent repeated homelessness.

Few buildings in Rohnert Park could be readily and economically converted into conventional emergency shelters. Given very high apartment occupancy rates and the fact that local motels are thriving, there may not be an opportunity to develop emergency housing in this manner. Given that Rohnert Park has largely developed since 1960, there are also no residential hotels, rooming houses, or similar buildings that lend themselves to conversion to a traditional emergency shelter. If a conventional emergency shelter were established in Rohnert Park, it would probably be in a newly-constructed building.

Other Homeless Facilities

Although there is no homeless shelter in Rohnert Park, emergency shelter is available nearby in Santa Rosa and Petaluma. In Santa Rosa, Catholic Charities operates the Family Support Center which provides emergency, overnight shelter for families with children and the Homeless Services Center, a day service center for homeless individuals. The Center serves 75 to 100 persons during the spring and summer, and 100 to 150 individuals during the winter months.

Other homeless facilities in the vicinity include a homeless shelter at the National Guard Armory in Santa Rosa that is operated during the winter months by the Interfaith Shelter Network. The Armory shelter has a typical population of 120 men and women, and a capacity of approximately 170. It is open about 12 hours per day, opening each evening around 7 pm. Users of the shelter are allowed a shower, dinner, and breakfast.

Additional facilities include the Redwood Gospel Mission in Santa Rosa, which houses from 70 to 80 men each night. The Manna Home provides emergency shelter for women and children, and the Vietnam Veterans of California, Inc. operates a facility for homeless families with children and single veterans. The women's emergency shelter (operated by the YWCA) provides emergency shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence. The Sonoma County People for Economic Opportunity operate two homes, one for families and one for single women. Sonoma County also has a residential AIDS shelter. The Elwood Opportunity Center in Petaluma is a daytime service center for homeless individuals.

In total, the emergency shelters assist about 10 percent of homeless persons in Sonoma County during the year. Statewide, there is sufficient inventory of available facilities to meet the needs of only about one in six homeless individuals, and only one in five homeless families[34].

Many local churches and charities provide funds for emergency shelter at local motels when families are displaced from their homes by fires or other circumstances.

University Students

Sonoma State University (SSU) is located adjacent to the Rohnert Park city limits and receives sewer service from the City. The university creates a need for student housing in the community. During the 1999-2000 school year, the campus supported 7,011 students and 1,122 employees. The Master Plan for the university anticipates an eventual enrollment of 10,000 students.

The university's goal is to provide campus housing for at least the first two years (freshman and sophomore) of a student's tenure, and have some additional space for upperclassmen. Based on annual enrollment growth projections of five percent, it is estimated that the university's housing need will increase from approximately 1,796 in Fall 2000 to 3,326 in Fall 2004[35].

At the beginning of the 1999 school year, SSU housed approximately 1,340 students on campus and by Fall 2000 will be housing 1,800. Due to growth projections and the lack of available student housing in the surrounding communities, the university is hoping to add housing through the following projects:

- Phase II of Sauvignon Village, projected for occupancy in Fall 2002, will house 666 more students.

- A housing complex may be developed in what is now Parking Lot D to accommodate 400 students.

- The university has a goal of developing housing on a 34.6-acre parcel located adjacent to, and northwest of, the existing campus boundary, which is not currently owned by the university. Housing scenarios range from high-density apartment-style courtyard housing to lower-density, single-family attached and detached dwellings that could accommodate faculty and university staff[36]. The General Plan's Land Use Diagram reflects the university's intentions for residential development in this area.

The SSU Associated Students also operates a transitional housing program that provides housing assistance for up to six weeks.

Student Housing Needs

New student housing should be located near the university and appropriate commercial centers to ensure access without the need for automobiles. In general, students should have housing they can rent for the school year.

Approximately 75 students per year receive emergency housing assistance from the university.

Rents for student housing should be as low as possible to meet limited student budgets. Students with limited financial resources may find it difficult to meet move-in requirements for rent and security deposits. Landlords and apartment managers are generally not willing to accept parents as co-signers or to consider financial aid income (such as loans, grants, and scholarships) when determining whether a student meets the income requirement of three times the rent level[37].

Several students have claimed at City Council meetings that they have faced discriminatory rental practices in Rohnert Park.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING HOUSING NEEDS

The city's existing housing needs, as described in this section, are summarized below. These needs are addressed by the Housing Element's programs and policies detailed in Section 9.5.

Housing Conditions

- A structural conditions survey has identified 14 homes in Rohnert Park as "sound deficient" and in need of repair and/or clean-up.

- Homes in the city's older neighborhoods were constructed without such energy-saving design features as insulation, double-pane windows, and weather stripping.
- A major earthquake could render some of the city's housing units, especially mobilehomes, uninhabitable.
- Approximately 30 to 40 multi-family units in buildings with ground floor parking could be highly susceptible to seismic damage.

Housing Supply

- The current housing vacancy rate of 3.6% is substantially lower than the 5.1% level needed to allow adequate mobility within the housing market.
- The current supply of homes offered for resale is far below the level that is considered a "balanced" market that places buyers and sellers on equal footing.
- Many homes are being taken off the rental market and sold, due to the high demand for ownership housing.

Housing Affordability

- A moderate-income or lower-income family of four would have to pay more than 30% of its income to purchase the median housing-priced Rohnert Park home in 1999.
- Similarly, the average $1,227 rent for a three-bedroom apartment is not affordable to a lower-income family of four, and has increased 14.5 percent during 1999.
- According to the last census, approximately one-half of all Rohnert Park households overpaid for housing, a level that rises to 90 percent for lower-income households.
- Many of the jobs in Rohnert Park and the region have salaries within the low-income range, and in many cases, even the combined wages of two working parents result in a lower-income household.

Special Needs

- The waiting list for Housing Authority's Section 8 rental assistance program includes 261 Rohnert Park households, most of whom are seniors or are disabled.
- Housing needs of the elderly include affordable homes that require lower levels of maintenance, are barrier-free, and are located near public transit. There is also a need for congregate, group, and continuing care housing.
- Mentally ill adults need more supported housing options, similar to the Hendley Circle model [Santa Rosa].

- Additional residential care homes that will accept low-income, elderly persons who have a mental health diagnosis are needed.
- Duplex studio units, units that count as one unit but offer single-occupancy living spaces, are needed for the mentally-ill population.
- Housing needs of the physically disabled include disabled-accessible housing designs and housing locations near public transit.
- There is a lack of apartments with three bedrooms or more to accommodate large families.
- Female-headed households need housing units designed for multiple households to lower housing costs, share childcare, and obtain emotional support.
- Farmworker households need housing that is affordable to lower-income households, including large units as well as housing for single males.
- There is no homeless shelter in the city.
- College students need housing that is affordable to lower-income households near the university and commercial centers.
- Students may face discriminatory rental practices in Rohnert Park.

9.2 PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

ABAG Projections 2000

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), a regional council of governments, has recently released *Projections 2000* for the Bay Area, which. is designed to predict regional and local growth and distribution of population, households, employment, income, and labor force during the period 2000-2020. *Projections 2000* forecasts are based on regional and county growth models, and the local availability of land, local development policies, density assumptions, and travel demand.

For the Rohnert Park area, *Projections 2000* provides estimates for the area within the 1999 city limits, as well as a larger subregional study area that encompasses large areas outside of the city. The Housing Element focuses on the former in order to provide consistency with ABAG's projected housing needs discussed in the next section.

ABAG projects the following household and job growth within the city limits during the Housing Element's planning period of January 1, 1999 to June 30, 2006:

Table 9.2-1
Projected Growth within 1999 City Limits, 1/1/99 – 6/30/06

	1/1/99	6/30/06	Change
Households	14,865	15,428	+563 / 4%
Total Jobs	23,332	27,348	+4,016 / 17%

Source: ABAG Regional Housing Distribution Model

The specific types of projected jobs within the city limits have not been provided by ABAG. However, ABAG anticipates that nearly two-third of the new jobs projected to be added within the Rohnert Park subregional area between 2000 and 2010 will be in the service and retail sectors, which typically pay some of the lowest wages (see Housing Affordability), and the same will likely be true for jobs within the city limits. The increase in low-paying jobs will have an associated increase in the demand for affordable housing.

General Plan Buildout

As summarized in Table 2.3-3 of the Land Use and Growth Management Element, buildout under the General Plan is anticipated to be somewhat lower than the *Projections 2000* estimates. The projected annual population growth rate of 1 percent will add approximately 8,400 residents to the City, resulting in an estimated population of 50,400 by 2020.

Job growth is expected to occur at an annual growth rate of 1.9 percent, adding 9,700 jobs for a total of approximately 31,600 jobs by 2020.

REGIONAL HOUSING NEED DETERMINATION

Periodically, the State of California provides funds for HCD to determine the housing needs for each region. The housing needs process focuses attention on one of the most significant problems facing the state, region, and community, and calls upon each local community to address its fair share of responsibility. HCD determines the supply and affordability of housing that would, if met, make housing more accessible to existing and future residents. This determination is based on existing housing need, including the level of overcrowding, the potential loss of housing due to demolition, and projected regional growth rates (projected population, jobs, and households).

HCD has recently determined the Bay Area's 1999 – 2006 housing construction need to be 230,743 units. This number is a goal that is not meant to match, and often exceeds, anticipated and actual growth in housing.

In turn, ABAG is responsible for allocating the regional housing need goal among the cities and counties in the Bay Area. The numbers adopted by ABAG are required to be included in each locality's general plan, along with a strategy aimed at meeting their housing need.

ABAG has assigned 11.1 percent of the 1999–2006 regional housing construction need, or 25,672 units, to Sonoma County. Of the county's total, 1,462 units have been preliminarily allocated to the City of Rohnert Park to be developed within its 1999 city limits. This housing goal is further divided among four income categories that are defined in Table 9.2-2.

Table 9.2-2
Rohnert Park Regional Housing Need, 1999 – 2006 (Preliminary Allocation)[1]

Income Group	Number of Units w/i 1999 City limits	Number of Units Within SOI	Number of Units Total	Share of Total
Very Low (≤ 50% of AMI[2])	276	125	401	18.9%
Low (51 – 80% of AMI)	192	78	270	13.1%
Moderate (81 – 120% of AMI)	408	189	597	27.9%
Above Moderate (≥ 120% of AMI)	586	270	856	40.1%
Totals	**1,462**	**662**	**2,124**	**100%**

Source: ABAG Regional Housing Needs Determination, June 1, 2000
[1] Planning period includes 1/1/99 through 6/30/06
[2] Established by HUD on an annual basis

The City of Rohnert Park has requested the Association of Bay Area Governments to revise the determination of its share of the regional housing need. The City's proposed revision is based upon available data and accepted planning methodology and is supported by adequate documentation in accordance with Government Code §65584. The proposed revision is based primarily on ABAG's improper methodology and ABAG's inaccurate description of the City's sphere of influence. More information about the City's proposal to revise the determination of its share of the regional housing need is found in correspondence from the City of Rohnert Park to

ABAG dated April 28, 2000, and August 18, 2000 which are incorporated into this Housing Element by this reference.

The City's share of the regional housing need includes that share of the housing need of persons at all income levels within the area significantly affected by the city's general plan (Government Code §65584(a)). Therefore, in this general plan, the City has provided for its share of the regional housing need in the sphere of influence proposed by this General Plan (see Table 9.5-1) since the sphere of influence is the area significantly affected by this general plan.

POTENTIAL LOSS OF AFFORDABLE UNITS

In the past, the federal government signed contracts with private owners of real estate to provide housing that is affordable to low-income tenants. These contracts for mortgages subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are expiring, leading to a loss of affordability for affected units.

State law[39] requires owners of such projects to provide at least nine months notice of contract termination or prepayment of federal assistance to tenants and public agencies. Owners who are proposing to sell or dispose of their properties must also provide first right of refusal to purchase those properties to entities who agree to maintain the affordability of the units.

Country Club Village

There is only one assisted housing development that is eligible to change from low-income housing uses during the next 10 years: Country Club Village, a project of 63 apartments that is occupied by 41 very low-income and 22 low-income elderly and disabled households. The project received original financing from HUD and has been allocated Section 8 rental assistance certificates. The income restrictions associated with the project's HUD financing are set to expire in May 2001, and the owners have recently notified the City and the County Housing Authority of their intent not to renew their contract. This action will allow rents to rise beyond the fair market rents established by HUD, probably requiring many tenants to relocate to more affordable housing.

The estimated cost of preserving the affordability of the Country Club Village units is estimated at $432,030, based on the difference between the actual rental cost of a unit and the maximum rent that a lower-income household is required to pay through the Section 8 program.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS

The city's projected housing needs, as described in this section, are summarized below. These needs are addressed by the Housing Element's programs and policies detailed in Section 9.5.

- Nearly two-thirds of the new jobs projected within the city could be in the service and retail sectors, which typically pay some of the lowest wages. The increase in low-paying jobs will have an associated increase in the demand for affordable housing.
- The City's preliminary regional housing need allocation for the planning period is 1,426 units, of which 468 are units affordable to lower-income households.

- The income restrictions on tenants of Country Club Village, an assisted housing project of 63 apartments that is occupied by 41 very low-income and 22 low-income elderly and disabled households, will expire in May 2001, and these units could be lost from the city's affordable housing base.

9.3 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

A number of factors may constrain the development of housing, particularly housing affordable to lower-income households. These factors can generally be divided into "governmental constraints," or those that are controlled by federal, state, or local governments; and "nongovernmental constraints," factors that are not generally created or cannot be affected by government controls.

An analysis of these factors can help in the development of programs that lessen their effect on the supply and cost of housing.

GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Governmental regulations and exactions are designed to achieve desirable land use patterns, coordinate development with infrastructure expansion, finance capital improvements, equitably distribute the cost of public services, maintain the ambiance of existing neighborhoods, improve the urban environment, and preserve open space and unique ecosystems.

However, they should be evaluated to determine whether they are excessive and represent an unnecessary constraint on the availability or affordability of housing being built, or contribute to the loss of existing affordable housing.

General Plan Policies

In addition to the Housing Element, two of the General Plan's other elements directly affect the location, type, and timing of housing that may be developed: the Land Use and Growth Management Element, and the Community Design Element.

Land Use and Growth Management Element

The Land Use and Growth Management Element provides for a variety of housing types, including Rural Estate Residential, a housing type currently not found in the city, as well as higher-density housing to meet the needs of students and lower-income households.

Density and FAR

The Element includes four land use designations, with the density and floor area ratio (FAR) parameters shown in Table 9.3-1. Minimum densities are included in all residential designations in order to maximize residential development on a limited supply of land, and achieve a balance and variety of housing types (Policy LU-8).

The density and FAR provisions outlined in Table 9.3-1 are sufficiently high to allow the development of housing affordable to lower-income households, based on previous housing projects, especially when combined with the 25% lower-income housing density bonus required by state law.

Table 9.3-1
Residential Land Use Designations

Land Use Designation	Density (units/gross acre)	FAR Factor	Max. Building Area (sq. ft.)
Rural Estate	up to 2.0	none	no maximum
Low Density	4.0 – 6.0	0.40	600 + FAR factor x net lot area[1]
Medium Density	6.1 – 12.0	0.55	400 + FAR factor x net lot area[1]
High Density	12.1 – 24.0	1.15	FAR factor x net lot area[1]
Mixed-Use Development[2]	n/a	n/a	2.0 FAR[3]

[1] includes garages and accessory structures
[2] residential uses mixed with office and/or commercial uses
[3] excludes parking structures and garages

The 2.0 FAR allowed for mixed-use developments that incorporate residential uses is a higher FAR than allowed for developments without housing (1.5), and is intended is promote housing in these areas.

The Element also includes the following provisions to foster housing affordable to lower-income households:

- "Second units" and density bonuses are allowed in addition to the maximum densities.
- The minimum lot size in the Low Density classification is 5,000 square feet, but the Zoning Ordinance may permit lots as small as 4,500 square feet to promote compact development if they meet specified community design standards in specific neighborhoods.

The potential residential development that could occur based on the Element's designations is discussed in Section 9.4.

Urban Growth Boundary and Growth Management

The Land Use and Growth Management Element provides for the establishment of an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) that represents the ultimate edge of urban uses in the Rohnert Park Planning Area by the year 2020. It includes the area within the 1999 city limits as well as all of the annexation and specific plan areas provided for in the General Plan. If the proposed 20-year Urban Growth Boundary ballot measure is approved by the voters in November 2000, it will replace Policy GM-2 in the General Plan and may be modified only by public vote, except in certain circumstances.

The UGB will promote a compact urban form that ensures the efficient provision of services, and preserve agricultural and open space outside of the boundary.

The growth management provisions of the Element are intended to ensure that growth within the UGB is paced to achieve General Plan build-out over a 20-year period, representing an annual average population growth rate of one percent, as well ensure that the necessary infrastructure and public facilities are provided for new development.

The growth management program anticipates an average of approximately 225 new housing units per year, and only applies a limitation on development during the following calendar year if residential development approvals in any two successive calendar years exceeds 560 units. The program's provisions for annual growth exceed the 195-unit annual average needed to meet the regional housing need preliminarily allocated to the City for the 1999 – 2006 period.

Furthermore, housing that is affordable to very low- and low-income households is not included in the total housing counts for the cap (Policy GM-3). The program also allows the cap to be adjusted up or down by as much as 10 percent by the City Council on an annual basis to accommodate changes in land use program assumptions (for example, vacancy rate factors and household size).

When applications for residential approvals exceed the growth management program's annual limits, a project's contribution towards housing affordable to lower-income households will be given top priority in determining preference for allocation of development approval (Policy GM-5). The growth management program will also be reviewed annually to determine, in part, whether priority should be given to specific housing types to achieve a balanced land use and housing program (Policy GM-4).

Balance of Housing Types

A balance of housing types is also encouraged by Policy GM-16, which requires that specific plans and implementing ordinances ensure that the contemplated housing types for each specific plan area are attained at build-out.

Based on this evaluation, it can be concluded that the provisions of the Land Use and Growth Management Element do not represent a constraint on the development of housing for all income levels.

Community Design Element

The Community Design Element is intended to protect and enhance Rohnert Park's physical and visual character. Several of its policies promote a diverse and affordable housing base, including the integration of townhomes and multi-family dwellings with single-family residences (Policy CD-17) and consideration for reducing parking requirements for high-density and senior housing (Policy CD-29).

None of the Community Design Element's goals or policies negatively impact the affordability or design of new residential development.

Zoning Ordinance Requirements

The provisions of the city's Zoning Ordinance directly control the approval process for residential development and affect the type and design of housing that may be constructed. It is anticipated that a complete revision of the Zoning Ordinance will occur following adoption of

the General Plan update, to reflect its new policies and programs, as well as incorporate many state-mandated provisions. However, it is useful to evaluate the effects of the current Zoning Ordinance on housing while it is used in the interim.

Residential Zoning Districts

The City's Zoning Ordinance specifies the zoning districts in which residential development may occur and under what circumstances. There are three basic residential zones:

- R-1 District allows single-family dwellings, including mobilehomes and manufactured housing, as permitted uses. Multi-family dwellings adjacent to non-residential districts for a distance of 150 feet are also allowed through a conditional use permit in the R-1 District.

- R-2 District allows single-family and two-family dwellings as permitted uses. Multi-family dwellings are also allowed under the same circumstances as the R-1 District

- R-M District allows multi-family dwellings as permitted uses.

Much of the city's single-family development has occurred in the R-1:6,500 District, although a custom-home subdivision was recently completed on larger lots at the northern city boundary, and the "D" Section is developed at an overall density of 8,000 square feet per unit.

Residential Development in Non-Residential Districts

The Zoning Ordinance also allows multi-family residential uses in all commercial zoning districts and the M-L Limited Industrial district through a conditional use permit (CUP). This provision is especially important since all residentially-zoned property within the current city limits has been developed and this is the only means of providing opportunities for housing development at present.

However, the CUP process can be a barrier to the approval of residential development, as shown by the city's recent experience with Burbank Housing Development Corporation's application for an apartment project on a commercially-zoned site. Although the project's environmental review identified no significant impacts and staff recommended approval of the application, it was subjected to two lengthy Planning Commission public hearings and an appeal hearing by the City Council. By the time the project was ultimately approved, BHDC's property options had lapsed and could not be renewed.

Zoning Ordinance Definitions

The ordinance's definition of "family" does not restrict the number of individuals who may reside in a home; any limitation is defined by Housing Code Section 15.12.010, based on the floor space of habitable rooms. This limitation is consistent with the state's Uniform Housing Code.

State Requirements

Amending the Zoning Ordinance in the following areas to implement provisions of state law would facilitate residential development:

- Second units: A second unit is an additional residential unit on the same lot as a primary single-family dwelling that provides complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons. Second units are usually considered housing affordable to lower-income households because there are no land costs associated with their development and they frequently rent for less than comparably-sized apartments. They may also occupy unused space in large homes, and by supplementing the income of the homeowner, allow the elderly to remain in their homes or make it possible for lower-income families to afford homes.

- The City is required by state law to process a request for a second unit through a conditional use permit, and approve the application if it complies with specified criteria. Amending the Zoning Ordinance to prescribe clear procedures and standards for approving second units would encourage and facilitate their development.

- Density bonuses and other affordable housing incentives: State law requires the City to adopt an ordinance that specifies the method of providing density bonuses and other developer incentives for lower-income housing units. Although projects with density bonuses have been reviewed and approved in the past, amending the Zoning Ordinance to include procedures and standards for density bonuses and other incentives would facilitate the review and approval of projects proposing affordable housing.

- Sites for emergency shelters and transitional housing: State law requires the City to identify sites for emergency shelters and transitional housing, however, they have not yet been identified. The Zoning Ordinance must be amended to allow opportunities for the development of such facilities in suitable locations.

Residential Development Standards

The Zoning Ordinance prescribes minimum standards for residential lot sizes, yards, and open space per unit, and maximum lot coverage (Table 9.3-2). These standards are typical of many California communities and contribute to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare; and the maintenance of the city's quality of life.

Table 9.3-2
Selected Development Standards for Residential Zones

District	Minimum Site Requirements				Minimum Yards	Min. Open Space/DU	Max. Lot Coverage
	Width	Depth	Area (sf.)	Density[1]	Front-Side-Rear		
R-1: 8,000	75 ft.	100 ft.	8,000	5.5	20 - 5 - 20 ft.	--	50%
R-1:6,500	65 ft.	100 ft.	6,500	6.7	20 - 5 - 20 ft.	--	50%
R-2:Duplex	60 ft.	100 ft.	6,000	7.3	20 - 5 - 20 ft.	500 sf.	40%
R-M:2,000	100 ft.	100 ft.	2,000	21.8	20 - 10 - 20 ft.	530 sf.	40%
R-M:1,500	60 ft.	100 ft.	1,500	29.0	20 - 10 - 20 ft.	400 sf.	40%
R-M-H:800	100 ft.	100 ft.	800	54.5	20 - 15 - 20 ft.	200 sf.	50%

Source: Rohnert Park Zoning Ordinance
[1] Units per acre

Modifications to minimum standards are allowed under many circumstances, including:

- Reductions in minimum lot size, side and rear yards, and distances between structures on a lot; and increases in maximum lot coverage of up to 10 percent through the P-D Planned Unit Development combining district
- Reductions in required side and rear yards to a minimum of five feet through a conditional use permit
- Increases in maximum lot coverage of up to five percent through the approval of a variance by the Planning Director

The only maximum height limitations on residential development apply in the R-M:1500 District, which has a limit of three and one-half stories. Conversely, there is a four-story minimum height requirement in the R-M-H:800 District, which can only be reduced through a conditional use permit.

None of these development standards have been identified by applicants as prohibitively restrictive. The minimum open space and maximum lot coverage provisions that correspond to each multi-family density can be easily met. Furthermore, non-profit housing groups seeking to provide housing affordable to lower-income households have found the densities allowed in the multi-family districts to be sufficiently high for their needs, especially with a density bonus.

Parking Standards

Minimum residential parking standards in the Zoning Ordinance are:

- Single-family dwellings: 2 spaces enclosed in a garage or carport

- Duplexes: 4 spaces, 2 of which must be in a garage or carport
- Multi-family units, 3-9 units: 3 spaces per 2 dwelling units, one of which must be in a garage or carport for each unit, plus the number of additional spaces prescribed by the Planning Commission if deemed necessary
- Multi-family units, 10 or more units: 2 spaces per unit, of which one must be in a garage or carport, plus one additional uncovered parking spaces for each bedroom in excess of three bedrooms per unit, plus the number of additional spaces prescribed by the Planning Commission if deemed necessary
- Mobilehome parks and trailer parks: 1 covered space per unit, plus one-half uncovered guest space per unit
- The Planning Commission may grant exceptions to parking requirements through a conditional use permit. This provision has been used frequently in the past to allow the conversion of garages to living space, without a requirement for any new covered parking to offset the loss of parking. The Commission recently indicated its desire to continue allowing such conversions because they may be needed by a family to accommodate an elderly relative or by an elderly resident to supplement their income through rentable space.
- Residential developers and city staff have identified the following issues with the City's parking requirements in the past:
- The Zoning Ordinance provision allowing the Commission to require additional parking for multi-family development is too vague and specific standards should be defined to facilitate project design and review.
- Ordinance regulations require the same amount of parking for all sizes of multi-family units and do not allow fewer spaces for smaller (e.g., studio and one-bedroom) units.
- There is no provision for reduced parking in the case of projects for elderly or disabled residents.
- There is no provision for reduced parking standards for student housing projects near Sonoma State University.

Amending the Zoning Ordinance to include these provisions would facilitate the residential development process.

Design Standards

The Zoning Ordinance requires architectural and design review of residential development. The site plans, elevation drawings, and landscaping plans of larger projects are typically reviewed by the Planning Commission, which uses the following design guidelines when evaluating a project:

- Variation from adjoining structures in the height, bulk, area, openings or breaks in the facade facing a street, and/or line and pitch of roof

- Variation from adjoining structures in the arrangement on the parcel
- Variation in architectural motifs
- Variation from directly adjacent structures of materials, color and arrangement of exterior materials
- Internal harmony and consistent relationships within the design of a structure

Subdivisions of single-family dwelling units are also required to have specific numbers of exterior design variations depending upon the number of lots in the subdivision, and to provide architectural designs that vary from those in adjacent subdivisions. Developers are encouraged to provide a variety of floor plans.

The Zoning Ordinance also includes design standards for manufactured homes to ensure that they are compatible with conventionally-built residential structures in the surrounding area. These standards do not exceed the limitations prescribed by state law.

Although the Zoning Ordinance delegates design review authority to the Director of Planning and Community Development, in practice most residential projects are reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. Should the City wish to continue this approach, the Zoning Ordinance should be appropriately amended to reflect current procedures, and clearly delegate certain responsibilities to the Director.

Project Review

Delays in processing housing development applications through the city's review and approval process can add to housing costs. If the developer buys the land outright, there are interest costs, and if they obtain an option to purchase, there are option costs to hold the land.

Length of Review

In recent years, varying amounts of time were taken to consider and approve housing construction proposals. Generally, the greater the public controversy regarding a proposal, the longer the time spent in the review process. Public hearing continuances have resulted from requests by project opponents for additional information, studies, and project re-designs. Each change in the project design can have associated architect and engineering fees, which grow with each revision.

Processing delays can also result from incomplete submittals by project applicants, inadequate responses to staff requests for additional information and exhibits, and failure to design projects to city standards.

Appeal Process

The review process can also be delayed by provisions of the Municipal Code, as was the case of a recent conditional use permit application for a housing project targeted towards lower-income households that was denied by the Planning Commission. The applicant's appeal to the City

Council was delayed for several weeks by a provision in the Zoning Ordinance (Section 17.62.070 D.) that allows the Council to decide whether it wants to hear an appeal. Amending the Zoning Ordinance to automatically require a public hearing by the Council on all appeals pertaining to housing projects targeted towards lower-income households would expedite their review.

Specific Plan Requirement

The Land Use Element requires the preparation of specific plans prior to development in any of the growth areas. While this requirement will lengthen the review and approval process, it is necessary to ensure that development occurs in a manner consistent with land use and design criteria, environmentally-sensitive areas are conserved, and adequate infrastructure is provided. The City has recently doubled its professional planning staff in order to expedite the preparation and approval of specific plans, as well as the residential growth anticipated by the Land Use Element.

Lack of Article 34 Authority

Article 34 of the California Constitution requires that when the city develops, constructs, or acquires a housing project targeted towards lower-income households, its qualified electors must approve the project by a majority.

The City of Rohnert Park attempted the approval of an Article 34 measure in 1994, which would have authorized an average of 100 low-income units per year for a period of ten years. The measure received only 46% of the votes cast and was defeated.

Although the City has been effective in providing rentals affordable to lower-income households by supporting the efforts of non-profit agencies, the lack of Article 34 authority has hindered the City's affordable housing program.

Adopted Codes

The City has adopted recent editions of the Uniform Building Code, Uniform Housing Code, National Electrical Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, Uniform Mechanical Code, and the Uniform Fire Code.

The City has amended these codes in a few instances when necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. For example, the Building Code has been amended with additional requirements for concrete slab floors to mitigate local expansive soil conditions. Lighted address numbers are required to improve identification of homes by emergency personnel. Smoke detectors are required in single-family homes and automatic fire alarm systems must be provided in multi-family complexes, apartment complexes, and condominium complexes. Automatic fire suppression systems must be installed in new residential structures and substantially-remodeled dwelling units. While these measures result in higher initial housing costs, they are offset over the long run by savings on homeowners insurance and property damage.

On average, five residential code enforcement actions occur each month. Given that buildings constructed in Rohnert Park are aging, the need for building code enforcement activity has increased in recent years.

Site Improvements

The Community Design Element calls for a 52-foot wide local neighborhood street section (CD Figure 3.2-5) that provides two travel lanes, two parking lanes, sidewalks, and curbs and gutters on either side. This design is intended to adequately accommodate traffic, parking, pedestrians, and drainage.

Additional requirements in the city's Subdivision Ordinance include the planting of street trees or a $40 per tree payment, and the installation of utility lines underground. These requirements greatly enhance the appearance of residential neighborhoods.

Impact Fees and Exactions

The City charges a variety of development impact fees for capital outlay, water and sewer connections, water reclamation, traffic impacts, and parks/open space/recreation. For example, water and sewer fees are used to pay for the increased system capacities required by the development. In some circumstances, a development impact fee is also assessed on projects for them to "buy in" to the system of existing infrastructure.

While these fees may affect housing prices, the only alternatives would be their payment by the existing taxpayers of the City of Rohnert Park or no further residential development, either of which are infeasible.

A 1998 fee survey compared the development impact fees charged by Rohnert Park (Table 9.3-3), including the "buy-in" fee, with six other jurisdictions that share the same market area and water and sewage treatment systems, and are in a similar stage of urban development.

The survey found that the development impact fees charged by the City, totaled approximately $13,277 for a single-family dwelling (three bedrooms, two baths, 1800 square feet), a total that was $1,674 lower than the average for the comparable fees of the other six cities.

As shown in Table 9.3-3, the city's water connection, sewer connection, and parks and recreation fees are lower for multi-family dwellings than single-family units in recognition of their generally lower impacts on these systems.

Fees are also charged for services provided by the planning and engineering departments during the review, entitlement, and construction phases of a residential project. The study also concluded that these fees are significantly lower than all surveyed cities, and that the City provides services with limited cost recovery from applicants for staff time and materials.

Table 9.3-3
Residential Development Fees per Unit

Type of Fee	Fee
Special Water Connection	
Single-family	$1715
Multi-family	$1300
Traffic Signalization	
Single-family	$1085
Multi-family	$1085
Mobilehome	$1830
Sewer Service Connection	
Single-family	$5910
Multi-family	$4945
Mobilehome	$3545
Water/Wastewater Conservation	$ 325
Capital Outlay	
Single family	
1 bedroom	$1050
2 bedrooms	$1285
3 bedrooms or more	$1455
Multi-Family	
1 bedroom	$ 870
2 bedrooms	$ 925
3 bedrooms	$1185
4 bedrooms or more	$1340
Mobilehome parks - adults only	
1 bedroom	$ 630
2 bedrooms	$ 750
3 bedrooms or more	$ 870
Mobilehome parks with children	
1 bedroom	$ 750
2 bedrooms	$ 870
3 bedrooms or more	$ 925
Development impact ("buy-in" for previously unassessed property)	$17,715/acre

Source: 1998 Fee Survey

Rohnert Park has developed according to the neighborhood concept. Residential neighborhoods are constructed around a park and/or school site, the dedication of which is required by the city's subdivision regulations. The required area is approved by the City Council upon approval of the tentative map. Standards in the General Plan provide guidance as to how much land needs to be dedicated.

City Housing Programs

The inclusionary housing requirement (Program 9.1 of Section 9.5) is a critical component of the city's housing program and an active means of providing affordable units to households typically shut out of the housing market. Developers of residential projects are required to rent or sell 15 percent of the units at prices or rents affordable to lower- or moderate-income households. The inclusionary program is also intended to promote the economic integration of lower-income households in neighborhoods and the dispersion of such units throughout the city. The requirement may also provide an incentive for developers to take the next step and increase their project's share of units affordable to lower-income households to 25 percent in order to qualify for a state housing density bonus.

The inclusionary requirement is also intended to offset the negative effects of new market-rate housing on the provision of non-market rate housing. The construction of above-moderate income housing depletes the amount of available residential land, while contributing to rising land prices because of a greater scarcity of developable sites. Market-rate housing development also exacerbates the affordable housing problem by creating greater needs for goods and services typically provided by low-income employees.

There has been extensive debate over the question of who bears the cost of an inclusionary requirement. Depending on the relative strength of the housing market, the costs may be incurred by:

- Land owners, who may receive a lower price for their land if developers are expecting a lower profit margin from the inclusionary requirement
- Developers, who may have to accept lower profits if housing prices cannot be raised
- The purchasers of market-rate units, who may have to pay higher housing prices if the local and regional housing supply is limited and prices are at least as high in areas outside the city

In the currently-strong housing market, it is possible that the costs of the inclusionary housing requirement will be incurred by all three groups.

It is not anticipated that this requirement will have the effect of diverting residential development to other Sonoma County jurisdictions, since inclusionary requirements have been adopted by Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Healdsburg, Cotati, Sonoma, and Sebastopol. The Windsor General Plan contains an inclusionary housing policy that has not yet been implemented.

By limiting the inclusionary requirement to 15% and providing alternative means of compliance, the program is not seen as an undue or onerous constraint on the provision of market-rate housing.

Summary of Governmental Constraints

- Governmental constraints on the development of housing, as described in this section, are summarized below. The removal of these constraints is addressed by the Housing Element's policies and programs detailed in Section 9.5.
- The conditional use permit requirement for multi-family housing in non-residential districts can be a barrier to the approval of residential development.
- The Zoning Ordinance needs procedures and standards for second units.
- The Zoning Ordinance needs procedures and standards for density bonuses and other lower-cost housing incentives.
- The Zoning Ordinance needs to provide opportunities for the siting of emergency shelters and transitional housing.
- The Zoning Ordinance requires the same amount of parking for all sizes of multi-family units, and a specific standard for guest parking is needed for multi-family projects to facilitate their review and approval.
- Parking reductions are not currently allowed for smaller multi-family units, housing for the elderly or disabled, or student housing near Sonoma State University.
- The Planning Commission reviews the design of residential projects, although this responsibility is delegated to the Director of Planning and Community Development by the Zoning Ordinance.
- The review process for housing projects may be delayed by a provision in the Zoning Ordinance (Section 17.62.070 D.) that allows the Council to decide whether it wants to hear an appeal.
- The lack of Article 34 authority that would allow the City to develop, construct, or acquire low-income housing has hindered its affordable housing program.

NONGOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Nongovernmental constraints are those that are not created by local governments, but may be lessened through their actions.

Direct Construction Costs

Construction Materials

Housing prices are influenced partly by the types of construction materials used. Homes in Rohnert Park are generally of wood frame construction and finished with stucco or wood siding. This type of construction is the least expensive conventional method (brick, stone and concrete block are more costly). Composition shingle and built-up roofs, which are found on a large share of the community's homes, are also the least expensive, followed by wood shingle, wood shake, concrete tile, metal tile and clay tile[40].

The cost of lumber and wood products accounts for one-third of the costs of materials used to build a home. A typical 2,000-square foot home uses nearly 16,000 board feet of lumber and 6,000 square feet of structural panels, such as plywood[41]. A number of factors have recently driven lumber prices to near-record levels, making new homes less affordable. These factors include the increased pace of housing construction nationwide due to the improved economy, increased demand for lumber in Asia, a cut in federal timber sales, quotas on sales from Canada, mill closures, hurricane destruction in the Southeast, and an El Nino-shortened building season last year[42].

Since the beginning of 1999, the average price of framing lumber is up 36 percent and the average price of plywood is up 60 percent[43]. A typical wood-frame home uses about 15,000 board feet of lumber, and every $1 increase in the average wholesale price of 1,000 board feet of lumber increases the cost of a typical home about $20[44]. The cost of lumber for a local single-family house averaged $20,000 in 1999.

The booming housing construction trend has also led to tremendous shortages in insulation, drywall, cement, and concrete. Although producers are working at maximum capacity, they still cannot provide sufficient quantities of materials, resulting in higher prices. It appears that only a downturn in housing construction will alleviate the high prices for construction materials and the constraints on their availability.

Labor Supply

In addition to the shortage of building materials, builders have been unable to fill the high demand for housing in Sonoma County due to a shortage of skilled labor. The area lost many construction workers during the recession of the early 1990s, and rebuilding the labor supply will take many years. The Home Builders Association of Northern California is not anticipating a significant increase in the skilled labor force; therefore, the labor shortage will continue to be a constraint on the supply of new housing[45].

Over the long term, direct construction costs (including materials and labor) have decreased as a proportion of total costs due to a dramatic drop in the number of person-hours required to construct a unit, and the use of less-skilled (and therefore, lower-paid) workers because of a greater use of pre-fabricated materials. These costs, however, remain the largest component of the overall cost of a new single-family home[46].

The City can minimize construction costs by not requiring more costly kinds of building materials on residences, such as clay tile roofs. However, there is nothing within the city's power to affect the availability and cost of skilled labor.

Design and Location Preferences

Housing costs are affected in part by a residence's location, size, design, and the number and type of amenities.

Housing Type and Location

A public opinion survey of 645 households nationwide conducted by the National Association of Home Builders asked respondents to consider two hypothetical living arrangements:

- Purchasing a $150,000 townhouse in an urban setting close to public transportation, work, and shopping; or,
- Purchasing a larger single-family home for $150,000 in an outlying area, with longer commutes to work but more private open space.

Eighty-two percent of survey respondents chose the single-family house in an outlying area.

However, given the city's large number of mobilehomes, single-family homes on small lots, condominiums, and apartments, it appears that residents are also willing to accept non-traditional designs.

Size and Amenities

There has been a dramatic change over the last 30 years in the size of housing units and the amenities provided to them, as shown in Table 9.3-4. The average size of a single-family home has increased by nearly half. One-third of new homes has four or more bedrooms, despite the drop in average household size, partly due to the rise of specialty rooms such as home offices, sunrooms, media rooms, and exercise rooms. All of these design trends can result in higher prices for housing.

Countering higher construction costs is a trend towards smaller residential lots. The average lot size for new homes nationwide has dropped nearly 5,000 square feet over the last 20 years.

Future Trends

Analysis of the United States Census Bureau's 1999 Current Population Survey reveals that while homeownership rates have risen over the last few years, the rise in apartment households has outpaced those rates. The data also showed that the fastest-growing segment of the apartment market came from households earning $50,000 or more, a 4.7% increase over the previous year47.

The Census Bureau is projecting a boom in the population groups most likely to choose an apartment – young adults, one-person households and married couples with no children. Apartments offer a lifestyle better suited to the needs of these groups by combining convenience and amenities. They also provide flexibility to respond to job and lifestyle changes.

Table 9.3-4
Comparison of New Home Characteristics Nationwide

Characteristic	1971	1999
Average floor area	1,500 sq. ft.	2,225 sq. ft.
Homes ≤ 1,600 sq. ft.	65%	26%
Homes ≥ 2,400 sq. ft.	9%	67%
Two or more stories	17%	52%
2 ½ or more bathrooms	15%	53%
Four or more bedrooms	18%	33%
Dishwasher equipped	--	91%
Range/stove/oven equipped	--	88%
Central air conditioning equipped	36%	84%
Two-car or greater garage	53% (1975)	79%
Garbage disposal equipped	--	75%
Microwave equipped	--	67%
Fireplace(s) equipped	36%	61%
Security system equipped	--	36%

Sources: "Characteristics of New Homes Completed, " Census Bureau; 1998 Builder Practices Survey, NAHB Research Center

The recently-approved Mountain Shadows apartment project reflects this trend. Amenities that are planned for tenants include indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, a fitness center, a resort-style swimming pool, and a built-in computer desk in every unit wired with high-speed Internet service.

Furthermore, tax law changes in 1997 have caused many Americans to question the assumption that owning a home is better from an economic standpoint than renting. Now that the first $500,000 of capital gains on homes sold by joint filers are exempt from taxes, many people – particularly empty nesters – are choosing to sell their homes and rent, letting someone else worry about cutting the grass, household repairs, and paying property taxes.

Land Costs

Approximately 25 percent of housing costs are attributable to land costs in most real estate markets. A major component of this cost is land speculation. Land costs are also affected by such factors as zoning density, the availability of infrastructure, the existence or absence of environmental constraints, and the relative amount of similar land available for development.

Vacant, residentially-zoned property within the 1999 city limits is limited to a .75-acre infill site off of E. Cotati Avenue. This site was recently under a purchase agreement for $220,000, which

would have had an associated land cost of $10,000 per unit, assuming the property was developed at the highest density.

Land costs for residential development in the areas designated for growth by the General Plan will not be known until properties have been annexed and development costs have been calculated. Whatever the future values are, it can be assumed that the cost of land will be a major factor in the cost of lower-cost housing. The City has assisted with pre-development costs for lower-income housing projects in the past, including the securing of property options, and it is likely that similar assistance in the future could prove useful to the development of such housing.

Financing Costs

Mortgage Interest Rates

Besides lowering monthly interest payments for new buyers, lower interest rates allow existing homeowners to refinance their homes, thereby lowering monthly housing costs and perhaps preserving their ownership status.

Mortgage interest rates fell to 6.66 percent for a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage in September 1998, the lowest levels since 1971. However, they have since risen to 8.24 percent in July 2000 for zero discount point loans[49]. Rising rates usually cool a housing market as lower-income buyers are unable to qualify at the higher rates and other postpone purchases until the next rate cycle.

Many major financial institutions and mortgage lenders that finance housing have offices in Rohnert Park. Additional financial institutions and mortgage lenders that lend in Rohnert Park have offices located in nearby Santa Rosa or Petaluma.

The large number of active real estate lenders in Rohnert Park indicates a strong real estate market. The Bank of America has listed the Rohnert Park area as one of the most attractive places in the world in which to live, and tabbed the area as a prime real estate investment opportunity. Real estate prices have appreciated substantially in recent years in all sections of Rohnert Park and there is no indication that the trend will end. Consequently, a relatively large number of financial institutions invest in local real estate.

Given the number and the size of some of the financial institutions active in Rohnert Park, there is no current shortage of financing for housing projects. There is loan money available for new construction, housing rehabilitation and mortgage financing.

Homes sales are occurring in all parts of the community, and there is no evidence of mortgage-deficient areas in the community for new construction or rehabilitation loans.

Construction Financing

Financing costs for construction are affected partly by how early in the development process loans must be taken out and how long the loans must be carried. Project delays can increase total interest payments, as well as create greater financial risk for a project. Overall, construction financing usually represents a small contribution to total housing costs.

Down Payments and Move-In Costs

The ability to accumulate a down payment remains a formidable barrier to many potential homebuyers. Low-income households find it difficult to make the transition from rental to ownership units because they cannot accumulate a downpayment while renting[51]. A $226,000 home (the September 1999 median price of homes in Rohnert Park) would require a 10 percent down payment of more than $22,000.

Similarly, low-income households are unable to obtain rental housing because they cannot accrue the necessary downpayment in the form of security deposits and first and last months' rents.

Summary of Nongovernmental Constraints

Nongovernmental constraints on the development of housing, as described in this section, are summarized below. Reducing these constraints, to the extent feasible, is addressed by the Housing Element's policies and programs detailed in Section 9.5.

- The high demand for lumber products and other construction materials has resulted in high prices, leading to higher housing costs.
- Public demand for larger homes with more amenities has resulted in higher housing costs.
- The limited availability of land for residential development has resulted in high land costs.
- High interest rates disqualify lower-income households.
- Downpayments and move-in costs are often beyond the means of lower-income households.

9.4 HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

During the planning period for this Housing Element (1/1/99 – 6/30/06), new housing will be provided through the construction of units within the 1999 city limits as well as in growth areas to the east and west. Other opportunities for housing include the development of second units on existing single-family lots.

POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Development within the 1999 City Limits

As the City approaches buildout within its current boundaries, there are limited opportunities for residential construction. As shown in the following table, 91 units have already been constructed since the beginning of the planning period, and there are opportunities for approximately 505 more units.

Table 9.4-1
Potential Residential Development – 1999 City Limits

Location	Use Design.	Acres	Approved/ Potential Units	Affordability Classification
Constructed Projects (1999)				
Muirfield Apartments			24 apartments	Very low
Honeybrook II			26 single-family units	Above-moderate
Rohnert Park West			41 single-family units	Above-moderate
Approved Projects				
1309 Maurice Avenue	N. Comm.	<1.0	7 apartments	Low
Mountain Shadows Apts.	Comm.	8.50	176 apartments	Moderate
Potential Development				
6025 Commerce Blvd.	Mixed Use	8.36	40 multi-family units	Moderate, low, v. low
1400 E. Cotati Avenue	High Density	.75	22 multi-family units	Moderate, low, v. low
City Center	Mixed Use	3.72	180 multi-family units	Moderate, low, v. low
Potential Redevelopment				
Southwest Blvd. Center	Mixed Use	7.0	50 multi-family units	Moderate, low, v. low
6920 Commerce Blvd.	High Density	1.25	30 multi-family units	Moderate, low, v. low
		Total	**596 dwelling units**	

Privately-Owned Land

The potential for residential development on privately-owned vacant land within the 1999 city limits is extremely limited:

- An approved mixed-use project on Maurice Avenue that includes seven, one-bedroom apartments along with a neighborhood commercial center is currently under construction.

- The City has approved a use permit for the Mountain Shadows Apartments project on an 8.5-acre commercially-zoned site across from the Doubletree Hotel that is proximate to the freeway, schools, parks, and commercial services. The 176 units, projected to be completed in 2001, will be arranged in three-story structures. Unit sizes range from one to three bedrooms, and project residents will be provided with extensive on-site recreational opportunities. The project's developer expects to fulfill an unmet demand for rental housing.

- The only vacant residentially-zoned property within the city limits is a .75-acre site at 1400 E. Cotati Avenue. Burbank Housing Development Corporation received approval for 20 lower-income apartments on the site in 1999, however, its option has lapsed. Development of the site with apartments by another applicant is likely in the near future.

During the general plan update process, other vacant and uncommitted sites were evaluated as to their suitability for residential development. It was concluded that most of the sites should retain their commercial or industrial designations due to a future need to provide community services, or because the sites were unsuitable for residential use because of high noise levels, inadequate access, incompatible uses in the vicinity, and/or lack of adequate services. Nevertheless, residential development could be approved for these sites through a conditional use permit.

However, the land use designation was changed to "Mixed Use" for two sites that were previously designated "Commercial" in order to encourage residential development. The Mixed Use designation will allow residential development as a permitted use on the following sites:

- An 8.36-acre vacant site on the west side of Commerce Boulevard, north of Hinebaugh Channel (approximately 6025 Commerce Blvd.). Although the rear of the parcel is unsuitable for residential development due to its proximity to the freeway, the site could accommodate multi-family units on the front portion. Access and other infrastructure necessary to support residential use on the site are already in place.

- The seven-acre Southwest Boulevard Shopping Center, which is discussed below.

Second Units

As described in the previous section, a second unit is an additional residential unit on the same lot as a primary single-family dwelling which provides complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons. Second units could potentially be developed on many existing lots, particularly in the city's older neighborhoods that are larger in area.

Given the lack of such units currently in the city, it is difficult to estimate how many could be developed by 2006, and therefore this type of housing is not included in Table 9.4-1 as potential residential development. However, revising the Zoning Ordinance to include explicit standards for second units could encourage their development in the near future.

Potential Redevelopment

The number of sites within the city limits that could be redeveloped with residential uses is very limited. Single-family areas are fully developed and occupied, and units have been generally maintained in good condition. Multi-family housing complexes likewise are almost completely occupied and have been maintained in standard condition. Industrial parcels are also largely utilized and have been maintained.

However, a few redevelopment opportunities exist:

- The owner of an office complex at 6920 Commerce Boulevard has expressed an interest in replacing it with an apartment project. The General Plan Diagram designates the site as High Density Residential. Given its location in front of an existing apartment complex, the development of approximately 30 multi-family units on the site is feasible. Existing access and other infrastructure is adequate to accommodate residential development on the site.

- Portions of the seven-acre Southwest Boulevard Shopping Center are aging and it may have lost viability as a neighborhood commercial center. While specialty stores occupy some of the commercial space, other commercial space has remained vacant for several years. Ownership of the center is split among several owners and the site is divided among multiple parcels.

  Multi-family development of perhaps 50 units could be approved on the site, although consolidating the site under one ownership would be problematic. Existing access and other infrastructure appears adequate to accommodate residential development on the site.

City-Owned Land

Vacant city-owned property within the 1999 city limits that would be suitable for residential development is very limited. The development potential of each is described below.

- The City owns two sites within the City Center (430 and 450 City Hall Drive). The 1999 City Center Concept Plan identifies residential uses as an important component of the pedestrian-oriented center, which will eventually include city hall, the public library, and commercial uses. Dwelling units are allowed as a primary use, and higher floor-area ratios (2.0 vs. 1.5) are allowed for mixed-use projects that include residences.

  Revenue bonds to construct a new city hall and library within the City Center have been sold, and it is hoped that their construction in the next few years will be a catalyst for mixed-use development nearby.

  The City is actively working with potential developers to construct approximately 180 high-density units above ground-floor commercial uses. A mix of lower- and moderate-income units is assumed for these sites, with the potential for senior housing.

  The sites are designated as "Mixed Use" by the General Plan diagram, which will allow residential development as a permitted use. One of the properties is vacant, while the other is

improved with an office building and parking lot that will be demolished. Access and other infrastructure necessary to support residential uses on the sites are already in place.

- The City owns 14 undeveloped acres on the west side of the community that adjoin a baseball stadium and wastewater holding ponds. The City is considering dividing this area into three parcels in order to sell them. An appraisal report prepared for the parcels concluded that they are best suited for light industrial, research and development, or office uses. These sites are not considered suitable for residential use due to stadium noise, the objectionable odors that occur when the holding ponds are filled, and the lack of residential services on the west side, such as schools, parks, and a public safety station.

- A 10-acre, city-owned site located at the northeast corner of Rohnert Park Expressway and Snyder Lane was given to the city with the stipulation that it be used for medical uses. It is under lease to a group hoping to develop the property with a comprehensive "wellness center," that may include continuing care housing for the elderly. However, it is too early in the planning stages to make any assumptions about potential housing development.

- A 1.58-acre site owned by the city at 705 Rohnert Park Expressway, located near Food 4 Less, is designated for recreational purposes by the General Plan. Due to limited access, it is not considered suitable for residential uses.

- The City also owns a number of sites that are reserved for the development of water wells and storage tanks. These sites are not available for residential development because they are needed as integral components in the water supply system.

Growth Areas

The city's regional share of housing for the planning period is to be provided within the 1999 city limits. However, significant residential growth could occur in areas outside of the limits.

1999 Sphere of Influence

The city's Sphere of Influence is comprised of the area within the 1999 city limits and two areas outside of it: the 25-acre Wilfred/Dowdell Specific Plan area (proposed for a commercial center), and the Canon Manor neighborhood.

The Canon Manor rural subdivision, an unincorporated area located immediately south of Sonoma State University, is accessed by graveled roads and supported by individual water wells and septic systems. The subdivision has been plagued by failing sewer systems and contaminated water supplies.

Before annexation of Canon Manor to the City of Rohnert Park and further residential development can occur, a funding mechanism must be established to bring the infrastructure, including its streets, up to city standards. Property owners, the City, Sonoma County, and LAFCO have been working together over an extended period to resolve these issues, and it is hoped that an assessment district can be established to pay for the necessary improvements

Potential development of the Canon Manor area as provided for by the General Plan Diagram includes approximately 113 Rural Estate Residential infill units and 191 Low Density Residential units south of Alice Drive.

Expanded Urban Growth Boundary

The Land Use and Growth Management Element provides for the potential construction of 4,025 dwelling units outside of the 1999 Sphere of Influence, distributed among the various specific plan areas as shown in the following figure and Table 9.4-2.

Table 9.4-2
Potential Residential Development – Growth Areas
(outside of 1999 Sphere of Influence)

Location	Rural Estate 0–2 upga	Low Density 4–6 upga	Medium Density 6–12 upga	High Density 12–24 upga	Mixed Use	Total Units
University District SP	20 – 25	245 – 295	510 – 560	570 – 630	70 – 100	**1415–1610**
NE Specific Plan	40 – 60	575 – 635	100 – 140	200 – 250	--	**915 – 1085**
SE Specific Plan	30 – 50	145 – 165	180 – 220	--	55 – 75	**410 – 510**
NW Specific Plan	--	--	--	800 – 900	--	**800 – 900**
Totals	**90 - 135**	**965 – 1095**	**790 – 920**	**1570 – 1780**	**123 –175**	**3540-4105**

The range of residential densities will provide opportunities for housing at all income levels. In general, development within Rural Estate and Low Density areas will produce housing within the above-moderate income range, Medium Density will accommodate above-moderate and moderate-income housing, and High Density and Mixed Use will provide opportunities for lower-income housing as well as higher-income units.

The General Plan Diagram also promotes a range of housing densities, types, and sizes within residential neighborhoods (CD-H). The Community Design Element allows townhomes and multi-family dwellings to be integrated with single-family residences (CD-17).

Development outside of the 1999 city limits will occur within five designated specific plan areas (depicted in Figure 2.4-1 of the Land Use and Growth Management Element). Except for the provisions of the Growth Management program, no phasing requirements have been imposed on these areas, and property owners of any specific plan area could submit a specific plan and annexation request to the City after adoption of the General Plan. Given the considerable growth pressures in the area and the active interest in development expressed by numerous property

owners and owner representatives, it is likely that one or more specific plan will be prepared and submitted shortly after adoption of the General Plan.

If such plans are not forthcoming, the City could take an active lead in the preparation of the specific plans, as it did for the Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan, which is scheduled for adoption in 2000. In that case, the City brought together the many property owners in the area to formulate a plan, and paid for the plan's preparation, with deferred reimbursement from the property owners.

The type and location of residential development for each of the specific plan areas is summarized below, as described in the Land Use and Growth Management Element.

University District Specific Plan Area

Potential residential development within the University District, as called for by the Land Use and Growth Management Element (Table 2.4-1) includes:

- A 25-40 acre mixed-use center, located directly adjacent to Sonoma State University, which could include between 70 and 100 units.

- Approximately 35 to 45 acres of High Density Residential development immediately adjacent to the district's commercial core or along the linear park. This High Density Residential development need not be in a continuous uniform width band around the commercial core; however, all High Density Residential development in the area shall be adjacent to the core.

- Medium Density Residential development (60 to 70 acres) around the commercial core/High Density Residential uses.

- Low Density Residential development (55 to 65 acres) east of the medium density area.

- Rural Estate Residential development of 30 to 35 acres on the eastern edge of the Specific Plan area

Northeast Specific Plan Area

The General Plan Diagram provides for approximately 23.1 acres of Rural Estate Residential and 109.1 acres of Low Density Residential along the east side of Snyder Lane, between Copeland Creek and the "G Section" Neighborhood; as well as approximately 6.6 acres of Medium Density Residential and 12.5 acres of High Density Residential along the north and south sides of Eleanor Avenue.

Community Design Element Policy CD-43 stipulates that the High Density Residential development is to be located adjacent to open space and along the proposed north-south arterial and collector streets to maximize accessibility.

Southeast Specific Plan Area

The General Plan Diagram provides for approximately 10 acres of mixed-use development, which could result in the development of approximately 64 units, 30.3 acres of Low Density Residential, and 19.6 acres of Medium Density Residential in the Southeast Specific Plan Area. A higher floor ratio is allowed for the mixed-use area if it includes residential development (1.0 as opposed to .4) to encourage the development of housing in this area.

Northwest Specific Plan Area

Approximately 800 to 900 High Density Residential units could be constructed on 40 to 50 residentially-designated acres in the Northwest Specific Plan Area, developed on either side of the Wilfred Avenue extension.

Community Design Element Policies CD-44 and CD-47 are designed to ensure that residential developments are designed to capitalize on views of the surrounding separator to the west and north, and beyond, and that adjacent commercial areas are compatible with the residential uses.

Timing of Development

General Plan buildout is envisioned to occur over a period of 20 years, at an average growth rate of 225 housing units per year. The actual timing of development will depend on a number of factors, including:

- Market demand for housing
- Preparation and approval of specific plans
- Availability of water and wastewater disposal services, and
- Annexation approval.

Public Facilities

Land Use and Growth Management Element policies[52] require residential development applications to include a Public Facilities Financing Plan that demonstrates how streets, water, wastewater and solid waste disposal, and parks will be provided to the project. The Plan must demonstrate that completion of all necessary public facilities concurrently with the development is feasible.

Additionally, Growth Management Policy GM-15 requires the city to prepare, adopt, and implement a Capital Improvement Program to provide a framework to undertake citywide public facility improvements needed to accommodate anticipated growth. Some public facilities may be deferred, but only under specific provisions of Policies GM-11 and –12.

City Water Supply

The City of Rohnert Park currently derives its drinking water supply from municipal wells and the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) Petaluma Aqueduct, which supplies water from the

Russian River. The sources of the aqueduct water are from the Dry Creek and Russian River Watersheds. Rohnert Park's average annual use of SCWA water currently exceeds its entitlement, but the City has been able to purchase additional water from the unused allocation of another SCWA member.

As of 2000, the City of Rohnert Park has approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SCWA and the eight public parties to whom the SCWA provides water supplies. As part of the MOU, the City will receive an interim allocation until September 2010, when it is anticipated that additional water supplies will become available from SCWA. The planned SCWA entitlement will fulfill future growth demands from 2010 through 2020, and allow the City to reserve municipal wellfield production for backup and emergency supply purposes. However, during the interim, the City will continue to rely on their municipal wellfield as a source of water to supplement the SCWA allocation schedule.

City Wastewater Disposal

All development within the existing city limits is connected to sewer service. Sewer mains collect wastewater and transport it to a pumping station and the Laguna Water Reclamation Treatment Plant. As of 1999, the wastewater mains were sized to serve the area within the 1999 city limits.

The City of Rohnert Park is a partner in a sub-regional wastewater disposal system, and has been allocated a share of its capacity. Although the city's average dry weather wastewater flows exceed its allocation, it has been able to purchase excess capacity from other system partners.

Two projects are underway to increase the system's reclaimed water storage and distribution capacity. A storage pond has been completed and the Regional Water Quality Control Board has approved a 1.2-mgd increase in the expansion of the treatment plant's capacity. Rohnert Park is expected to receive at least one-third of this increase, which will accommodate residential growth in the short term.

The Subregional Long Term Wastewater Project is intended to meet the needs of partner cities through 2010 by transporting treated wastewater to The Geysers for injection into the geothermal field. It is anticipated that the City's capacity allocation from this project can accommodate an additional 2,751 dwelling units (3,155 units if sewer hook-ups are not provided to Canon Manor) [53]. This capacity would accommodate residential development until at least 2012, which is well beyond the planning period for this Housing Element.

Protection of Residential Quality

The Community Design Element contains several goals and policies designed to protect existing residential neighborhoods from negative effects associated with development, and to create livable environments in new neighborhoods, including the following:

- Ensure that the University District is developed in a manner that is sensitive to the existing residential developments to the west (CD-31)

- Ensure that development in existing neighborhoods is respectful of the character of existing uses and causes minimal design intrusion. (CD-53)
- Develop linkages within and between neighborhoods through linear parks, interconnected networks of streets (CD-2)
- Promote connections with adjacent neighborhoods (CD-B and CD-2)
- Ensure a fine-grained and integrated pattern of streets that provide continuity between neighborhoods, have a human scale, and enhance the character of neighborhoods (CD-24)
- Minimize the visual dominance of garages (CD-21)

AGENCY AND FUNDING RESOURCES

Agencies and programs that address housing needs within the City of Rohnert Park are already in place.

Community Development Commission

State law authorizes local governments to establish one or more redevelopment project areas to eliminate blight, and to expand and improve the supply of low and moderate-income housing. Redevelopment agencies may use the power of eminent domain to assemble and acquire sites for housing, both within and outside of a project area. They may also issue revenue bonds to finance infrastructure and provide long-term, low-interest loans for construction and rehabilitation. Funds may also be generated by tax increment financing, which captures for a time, all or a portion of the increased tax revenue that results from greater private investment in a project area.

The Community Development Commission of the City of Rohnert Park (CDCRP) was created in 1987 and established a Redevelopment Project Area that is generally west of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad tracks, with the exception of several isolated areas east of the tracks that are included within its boundaries (see following figure). Existing residential areas contained within the Project Area include the A, B, and L Section neighborhoods, and portions of the C and M Sections, as well as three mobilehome parks.

The CDCRP's powers and funds generation represent an important resource for housing, not only in the redevelopment project area, but outside of its boundaries as well. According to state law, twenty percent of the CDCRP's gross tax increment (less certain adjustments) must be transferred to the Housing Fund each year. This allocation must be spent on housing-related programs within five years of their deposit into the fund. For 1999-2000, the Housing Fund allocation is estimated to be $910,000, which will fund the programs described below and in Section 9.5.

California Community Redevelopment law specifies that at least 30 percent of all new or rehabilitated dwelling units developed by the Community Development Commission must be affordable to low or moderate income households. Not less than 50 percent of the affordable dwelling units developed by the CDCRP must be affordable to very low-income households.

Overall, at least 15 percent of all new or rehabilitated dwelling units developed by the CDCRP and other entities in the project area must be affordable to low or moderate income households, and not less than 40 percent of the affordable dwelling units must be affordable to very low-income households.

Since its establishment, the redevelopment agency has undertaken numerous programs and expended significant funds to support the development and conservation of housing. Its actions between 1995 and 1999 are described in detail in Appendix A, Implementation of the 1995 Housing Element.

Current Programs

Programs that are currently sponsored and supported by the CDCRP include the following:

- First-Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance Program

  The CDCRP provides in downpayment assistance as a silent second for qualifying low- and median-income, first-time homebuyers. Up to $15,000 is available to low-income households and $10,000 to median-income households. No interest is charged on the deferred loan, and the loan is forgiven at the end of ten years if the homebuyer lives in the house as their primary residence for the entire period. The loans are available to households both within and outside of the redevelopment project area.

  Twenty-six loans will have been approved by mid-July 2000, assisting one very low-income household, 15 low-income households, and 10 median-income households, and more than $300,000 will have been committed.

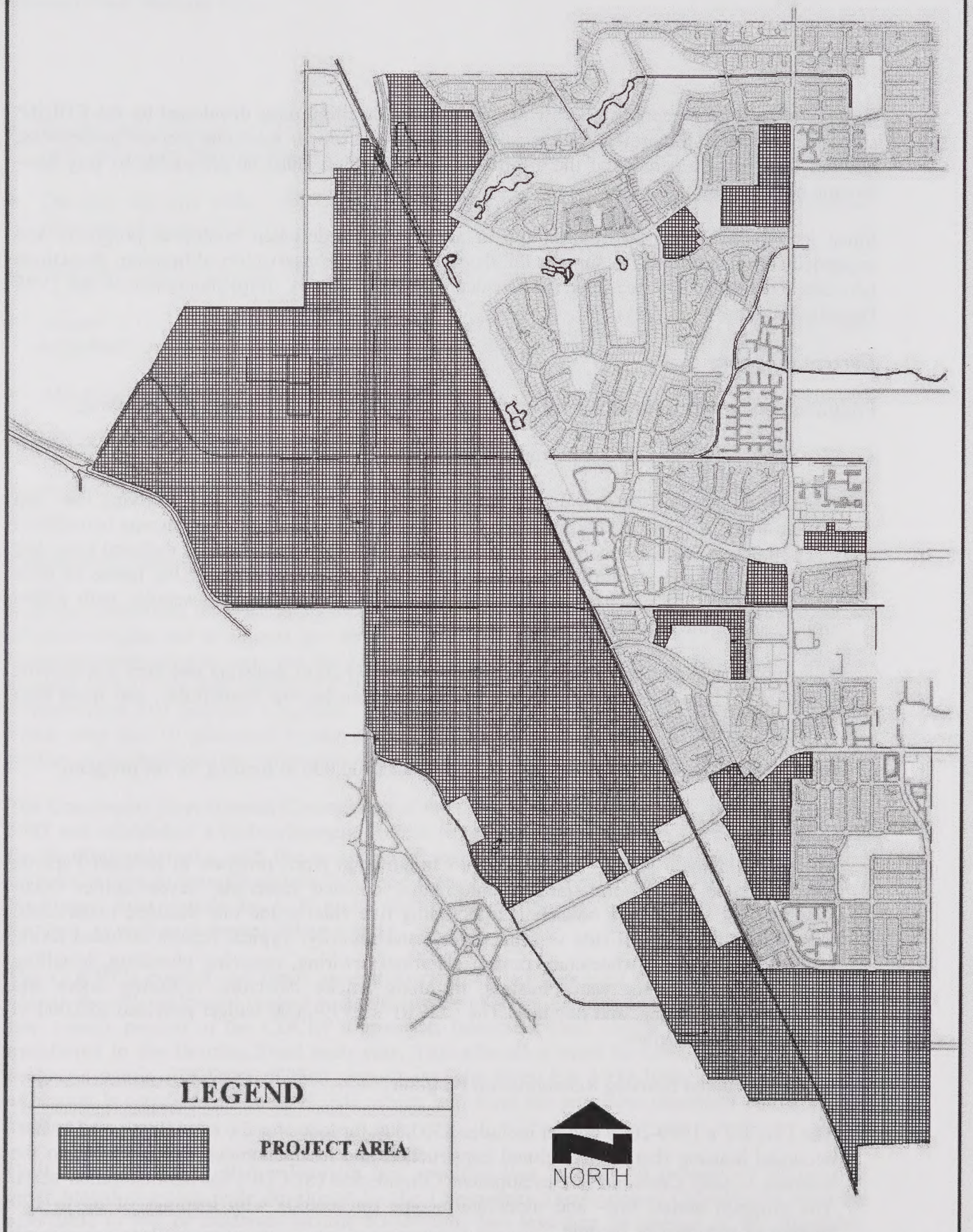
  In May 2000, the CDCRP authorized an additional $500,000 in funding for the program.

- Christmas in April

  The redevelopment agency coordinated a Christmas in April program in Rohnert Park on April 15, 2000. Using community volunteers and donated materials, seven homes occupied by very low-income households, including five elderly and one disabled households, were rehabilitated to provide warmth, safety, and security. Typical repairs included fixing leaky roofs, building wheelchair ramps, electrical rewiring, repairing plumbing, installing new furnaces and hot water heaters, installing smoke detectors, replacing doors and windows, landscaping, and painting. The CDCRP's 1999-2000 budget provided $20,000 of funding for the program.

- Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

  The CDCRP's 1999-2000 budget includes $500,000 for loans for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing (both conventional construction and mobilehomes), and $175,000 to the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC) for administration costs. The program assists low- and moderate-income households with incomes of up to 120 percent of area median income.



REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PROJECT AREA
ROHNERT PARK, CA 1997

The maximum loan amount is $35,000 for conventional homes and $15,000 for mobilehomes. Deferred, forgivable loans are available to very low- and low-income households, and amortized loans are available at below-market interest rates to moderate-income households.

The program's priority is for moderate-quality improvements necessary to assure that the home meets code requirements and basic housing quality standards. Eligible improvements also include room additions where the unit is too small for the occupant family, repairs or modifications for improved accessibility for disabled and/or elderly occupants, weatherization for energy conservation, and the construction of carports where no covered, off-street parking exists.

SCCDC staff will develop brochures, flyers, and press releases to market the program. Advertising and outreach may include newspaper articles and press releases, direct mailings to property owners, and neighborhood informational meetings.

- Support to Homeless Service Providers

  The 1999-2000 CDCRP budget includes funding of $51,250 to Petaluma People Services and $10,000 to the Homeless Prevention Group to address the needs of the homeless or those in danger of becoming homeless.

- Mortgage Credit Certificate Program

  The redevelopment agency participates in the Sonoma County Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) Program, which is a federal income tax program that allows a household to take a portion of their mortgage interest as a credit rather than a deduction. The program is available to low- and moderate-income households.

- Shared Living Home

  The CDCRP is currently in the process of establishing a fourth shared-living home.

Future Programs

The CDCRP's Housing Fund contained approximately $2,900,000 for housing programs as of July 1, 2000. Additions to the fund during the planning period (2000 to 2006) are estimated to be $7,200,000, for a total of $10,100,000.

Housing programs that the CDC is likely to undertake during the planning period are:

- Housing administration services provided by the City
- Homeless prevention services
- First Time Homebuyer/Silent Second Program
- Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

- Preservation of Country Club Village Apartments
- Multi-family housing construction assistance (such as City Center and within specific plan areas)
- A mobilehome park acquisition program

Sonoma County Community Development Commission

The city's redevelopment agency has contracted with SCCDC in the past for administrative services for its rehabilitation programs. The SCCDC employs staff with training and experience in conducting such programs. Its services include marketing rehabilitation loan funds, taking applications and obtaining third-party verifications of application information, employing underwriting standards in the approval of loans, obtaining appraisals, verifying payment of taxes, ordering credit reports, obtaining title reports, verifying insurance coverage, procuring pest reports, preparing rehabilitation work programs, procuring contractors for rehabilitation work, monitoring construction and obtaining releases, and preparing and recording final loan documents.

Sonoma County Consolidated Plan

In order to receive Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Act, and Federal Emergency Shelter Grant funds, the City of Rohnert Park has executed a Joint Powers Agreement for Community Development with Sonoma County and six other cities within the county that do not qualify for their own entitlements. The city and town managers of the participating municipalities form the Technical Advisory Committee that reviews and makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on issues relating to the distribution of funds within their jurisdictions.

CDBG funds have been used by the City in the past to facilitate the development of affordable housing, fund a rehabilitation program, and carry out an earthquake-bracing program for mobilehomes. During 2000, CDBG funds will be used to install approximately 96 sidewalk access ramps at 66 intersections in the oldest sections of the city to enable the mobility of the disabled.

Mobilehome Rent Stabilization

Mobilehomes constitute a major source of affordable housing in Rohnert Park. In an effort to provide reasonable standards for, and limit space rent increases to reasonable levels, the city's voters approved Ordinance 494 in 1987. Rather than setting rent ceilings, as in some apartment rent control ordinances, Ordinance 494 established a process by which park owners may obtain adjustments in space rent, linked to changes in the Consumer Price Index and capital improvements within the parks. The ordinance is currently being challenged by park owners who wish to decontrol the rental rates for vacant spaces.

The city has established a Mobile Home Rent Appeals Board to ensure that Municipal Code Chapter 9.70 (Ordinance 494) is administered fairly for both mobilehome park residents and park

owners, who may file space rent petitions. If a petition is filed, the Board serves as a quasi-judicial body that issues rulings on the space rent issue. The Board is staffed by the Assistant City Manager, City Attorney, and the Housing Specialist.

Fannie Mae Investment Plan

A number of programs have been recently initiated by Fannie Mae, the nation's largest source of financing for home mortgages and multi-family housing, that may be used to promote homeownership, housing rehabilitation, and housing upgrades within the City of Rohnert Park. The "House Bay Area" program is a $16 billion, five-year housing investment plan designed to increase affordable rental and homeownership opportunities for families in the nine-county Bay Area[54].

Specific housing needs Fannie Mae plans to address with its lender partners include:

- Expanding affordable mortgage products and services to support under-served communities, and low- and moderate-income families;

- Making available low downpayment products such as Flexible 97, a three-percent downpayment mortgage for borrowers with good credit histories but who lack the necessary funds for a downpayment; and

- Working with local lenders to provide products like Fannie Mae's HomeStyle loans for home purchase and renovation efforts.

Fannie Mae has also committed $100 million to the New Immigrants Initiative, a pilot program that enables people newly arrived in this country to achieve homeownership in a more flexible, streamlined fashion. Specifically, the initiative allows working, non-permanent residents who have applied for their permanent resident card to be eligible for certain Fannie Mae affordable mortgages. Key features include: down payments as low as three percent, more flexibility for borrowers with cash on hand, the use of a borrower's most recent hourly wage rate to determine qualifying income, acceptance of boarder income from relatives living in the same household, and part-time or multiple job income of a 12-month duration to be averaged over the most recent 24 months.

To help Bay Area residents prepare their homes to guard against future natural disasters, Fannie Mae has also launched a new loan initiative called "Project Impact Prevention Loans." These loans provide an affordable source of financing for upgrades to homes to prevent damage from natural disasters before they occur. Examples of the types of upgrades than can be financed include: foundation bolting, chimney bracing, cripple wall stiffening, window opening reinforcement, dry rot repair, and termite damage repair. There are no income limitations for borrowers, who can obtain up to $20,000 at a competitive interest rate, with repayment terms of up to ten years.

Sonoma County Rental Information and Mediation Service

Sonoma County Rental Information and Mediation Service (SCRIMS) provides information about the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords, and landlord-tenant law. The

organization also mediates disputes. Residents seeking such assistance have been referred to SCRIMS in the past.

Fair Housing of Sonoma County

Fair Housing of Sonoma County (FHOSC) is a joint project between Fair Houisng of Marin and Sonoma County People for Economic Opportunity. FHOSC is funded by HUD to conduct fair housing services in Sonoma County, to counter illegal discrimination, and to educate Sonoma County tenants, managers and property owners as to their rights and responsibilities under state and federal fair housing laws.

FHOSC provides bilingual counseling, investigative services, mediation, and legal referrals to persons confronted with housing discrimination, followed by mediation or referrals to HUD, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, or to attorneys, as appropriate. There is no charge for these services. The agency also provides information and training for rental property owners, real estate agents, and apartment managers on discrimination issues.

Community Support Network

Community Support Network (CSN) is a non-profit agency that provides a wide range of services to mentally and/or emotionally ill and homeless adults. CSN offers a network of social services, including residential alternatives to institutional care, social and vocational rehabilitation, chemical dependency counseling, case management, supportive housing, and other special social services. CSN is working with CDCRP to purchase a four-plex in Rohnert Park to shelter eight clients.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

The City has implemented the provisions of Title 24 of the State Building Code that require new residential buildings to meet a comprehensive set of standards for energy conservation. Builders of these units may achieve compliance either by calculating energy performance in a prescribed manner or by selecting from alternative component packages that prescribe a fixed method of compliance. All proposed residential units are checked by the Building Department to ensure that their design and construction complies with Title 24 energy standards. Additions and alterations must also meet these standards if they increase the heated or cooled floor space of a building.

Opportunities for improving energy conservation in the design of residential development include ensuring the consistency of tentative tract maps with Section 66473.1 of the Subdivision Map Act, which requires the designs of subdivisions to provide for future passive or natural heating or cooling opportunities, and requires the planting of trees along streets and in parking lots to reduce heat.

Homes constructed in the city between 1956 and 1975 probably need to be insulated or have supplemental insulation installed. The rehabilitation program recently initiated by the CDCRP covers such energy conservation retrofitting as insulation and weatherstripping.

9.5 HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

The following goals, policies, and programs are designed to address the existing and projected housing needs of the City of Rohnert Park. Each program has one or more individuals, bodies, or agencies responsible for its implementation, along with a potential or committed funding source, and a schedule for its implementation during the 1999 – 2006 planning period.

This section of the Housing Element is also the implementation plan for the Community Development Commission of Rohnert Park.

GUIDING POLICY

The City of Rohnert Park supports safe and affordable housing for all social and economic segments of the community as a means of securing desirable social and economic diversity.

GOAL: HOUSING SUPPLY

HO-A Promote opportunities for housing development to accommodate projected growth and facilitate mobility within the ownership and rental markets.

POLICIES: HOUSING SUPPLY

HO-1 Promote residential development within the 1999 city limits.

Program

1.1 Require that development of the following sites designated as "Mixed Use" by the General Plan Diagram include at least the specified number of multi-family units:

a) The City Center area: a minimum of 100 multi-family units

b) The Southwest Boulevard Shopping Center redevelopment site: a minimum of 50 multi-family units

Responsibility: Director of Planning and Community Development, Planning Commission

Funding Source: General Fund for review of proposals

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as development proposals for the mixed-use sites are submitted

HO-2 Facilitate residential development within the growth areas.

Programs

2.1 Coordinate the preparation of specific plans and annexation applications.

Responsibility: Planning Department

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as applications are submitted

2.2 Deny proposals for residential downzonings or reclassifications of residentially-designated property to nonresidential uses if such changes would have adverse impacts on the achievement of the City's Quantified Objectives that could not be offset or minimized.

Responsibility: Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as applications are submitted

2.3 Following the approval of a specific plan, require the applicant to post sites designated for high-density housing with visible, durable signs containing information about the site's development potential. Require such information to be provided in appropriate sales offices and provided to prospective buyers of nearby homes.

Responsibility: Planning Director

Funding Source: Project Applicant

Schedule: Following approval of specific plans

HO-3 Ensure that residential sites are served by adequate infrastructure and services.

Programs

3.1 Continue to work with regional agencies to ensure an adequate long-term water supply and wastewater disposal system.

Responsibility: Public Works Department, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

3.2 Continue to establish assessment districts and utilize subdivision agreements to finance adequate infrastructure.

Responsibility: City Council and Public Works staff

Funding Source: General Fund for administrative costs

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, during the processing of specific plans

GOAL: BALANCE OF HOUSING TYPES

HO-B Provide for a range of housing types within the community to accommodate a variety of incomes and lifestyles, and enable residents to remain in Rohnert Park throughout their lives if they so choose.

POLICY: BALANCE OF HOUSING TYPES

HO-4 Promote a diversity of housing types, including single-family detached and attached residences, mobilehomes, multi-family rental and ownership units, second units, and units combined with non-residential uses.

Programs

4.1 During the application and review process for specific plans, ensure that they provide for the diversity of housing types specified in the Land Use and Growth Management Element.

Responsibility: Planning Department, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as applications are reviewed

4.2 Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for second units on owner-occupied lots with single-family, detached homes, either simultaneously with or after the construction of the primary unit, subject to appropriate standards. Consider allowing the approval of second units by the Planning Director if specified criteria are met, and allowing reduced parking and modified parking designs for second units.

Responsibility: Planning Department, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

GOAL: PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

HO-C Address to the maximum extent feasible the housing needs of all economic segments of the present and future community, giving highest priority to lower-income households.

POLICIES: PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

HO-5 Minimize governmental constraints on the provision of housing that is affordable to lower-income households.

Programs

5.1. Add density bonus definitions and provisions to the Zoning Ordinance to facilitate the review of projects that propose a state housing density bonus.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

5.2. Revise the Zoning Ordinance's parking standards to provide reduced parking requirements for studio and one-bedroom apartments, and for student housing near Sonoma State University.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

5.3. Revise the Zoning Ordinance's parking standards to provide clear requirements for guest parking in multi-family projects.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

5.4. Amend Section 17.62.070 of the Zoning Ordinance to automatically require a public hearing for an appeal of a Planning Commission action related to an housing project targeted to lower-income households.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

5.5. Amend Chapter 17.40 of the Zoning Ordinance to clarify the design review authority for residential projects.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

5.6 Amend the Zoning Ordinance to add single room occupancy housing as a permitted use in districts allowing multi-family housing.

SRO's are residential facilities in which furnished rooms are rented on a weekly or monthly basis and which provide common facilities and services for laundry, cleaning, and meals. They can provide transitional or permanent housing for homeless individuals or couples.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: by July 1, 2001

5.7. Consider deferring development fees for housing projects targeted to lower-income households when needed to ensure project feasibility.

Responsibility: City Council

Funding Source: General and Redevelopment Funds

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as applications are reviewed

5.8 Initiate a ballot measure for Article 34 authority to develop, construct, and acquire housing that is affordable to low-income households.

See Governmental Constraints section for description of Article 34 authority.

Responsibility: City Council

Funding Source: General and Redevelopment Funds

Schedule: By 2002

5.9. Maximize potential residential development by amending the Zoning Ordinance to revise its definition of "dwelling unit" to stipulate that for the purposes of calculating density, duplex studio units whose total square footage does not exceed 850 square feet shall be considered a single unit.

Revise the appropriate ordinances that require residential development fees to stipulate that for the purposes of calculating fees, duplex studio units whose total square footage does not exceed 850 square feet shall be considered a single multi-family, one-bedroom unit.

Responsibility: Director of Planning, Finance Director

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

HO-6 Facilitate the availability of market-rate housing to low- and moderate-income, first-time homebuyers.

Programs

6.1 Continue to issue, in cooperation with other jurisdictions in Sonoma County, mortgage credit certificates to qualified low- and moderate-income, first-time homebuyers. Work with the Sonoma County Housing Authority to ensure that Rohnert Park receives a share of future allocations. (Potential number of households assisted: 75 total, 10 first-time buyers)

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Source: State program

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

6.2 Continue the First Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance Program to low- and median-income households. Review the program parameters at least annually and make program adjustments as may be indicated by changes in the housing market. (Potential number of households assisted 2000-2002: 20)

This program provides downpayment assistance to first-time homebuyers through "silent second" mortgages of up to $15,000 per household. No interest is charged on the loans and they are forgiven after ten years if the homebuyer lives in the house as their primary residence for ten years.

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: FY 2000-2002

6.3 Expand the First Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance Program to low-income households that are outside of the Redevelopment Project Area. (Potential number of households assisted: 20)

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Sources: CDBG Program (application for $150,000 has been made for 2000-2001 funding cycle)

Redevelopment Funds ($150,000 matching funds)

Schedule: FY 2000-2001

HO-7 Comply with the affordable housing requirements of California Community Redevelopment Law to maximize the number of affordable units provided.

Program

7.1 Ensure that at least 30 percent of all dwelling units developed by the CDCRP are affordable to low- or moderate-income households, and that not less than 50 percent of these are affordable to very low-income households. Ensure that at least 15 percent of all dwelling units developed in the redevelopment project area by public or private entities or persons other than the agency are affordable to low- or moderate-income households, and that not less than 40 percent of these are affordable to very low-income households.

These requirements are consistent with California Community Redevelopment Law (Health and Safety Code Section 33413). They may also be satisfied by several alternative methods.

Responsibility: City Manager, City Council, CDCRP

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

HO-8 Make the maximum use of resources available for the provision of housing affordable to lower-income households.

Programs

8.1 Continue to work with other agencies to take advantage of their administrative resources and receive a reasonable share of federal, state and private funding for housing.

Responsibility: City Manager, City Council, CDCRP

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

8.2 Maintain contacts with nonprofit housing organizations to benefit from their expertise in developing and supporting affordable housing. Refer potential developers of such housing to these organizations for assistance.

Responsibility: Planning Director, City Manager

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

8.3 Continue to partner with local mortgage brokerage firms to minimize administrative costs to the city.

The firms provide advertising, process applications, secure first mortgages, and address legal paperwork for the first-time homebuyer program.

Responsibility: City Manager, CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

8.4 Publicize affordable housing programs through the city's public communications and publications.

Responsibility: City Manager

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

8.5 Work with other Sonoma County jurisdictions to explore the feasibility of enacting a housing impact fee on businesses that generate a significant number of jobs in the community.

Responsibility: City Manager, Planning Director

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: by July 1, 2001

HO-9 Require the provision of affordable housing as part of residential development throughout the community.

Program

9.1 Require non-market rate housing to be included as part of residential projects, as follows:

a) 15 percent of the units in a rental housing project of five or more units shall be affordable to very low- and low-income households.

b) 15 percent of the units in a for-sale project of five or more units shall be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

c) Alternative methods of meeting the intent of the inclusionary requirements, such as the provision of land for the required inclusionary units or the payment of an in-lieu fee, may be permitted under certain circumstances.

d) The inclusionary units shall be constructed concurrently with market-rate units when feasible.

e) The long-term affordability of the inclusionary units shall be guaranteed.

Responsibility: Director of Planning and Community Development, Assistant City Manager, City Attorney, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: March 2001

GOAL: PRESERVATION OF AFFORDABLITY

HO-D Preserve the City's existing affordable housing stock, and ensure the long-term affordability of new non-market rate units.

POLICIES: PRESERVATION OF AFFORDABILITY

HO-10 Preserve the affordability of the City's existing affordable housing stock.

Programs

10.1 Continue to enforce Chapter 9.70, which controls space lease increases to protect the interests of mobile home park residents and park owners, and provide staffing to the Mobile Home Rent Appeals Board.

Responsibility: City Council, Assistant City Manager, City Attorney, Housing Specialist

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

10.2 Continue to enforce Chapter 16.58 of Title 16 (Subdivisions), which regulates the cessation of use, change of use, or conversion of use in mobilehome parks.

The provisions of this chapter require the filing of a report with the City Council when a subdivision application is filed for the conversion of a mobilehome park to another use, or at least six months before the closure of a park or the cessation of use of the land as a mobilehome park. The report shall address the impact of the conversion, closure, or cessation of use. The Council

is required to hold a public hearing on the report and may impose measures to mitigate associated impacts.

Responsibility: City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

10.3 Refrain from considering or approving the report referenced in Program 10.2 until the City Council is able to adopt zoning regulations which, to the maximum extent feasible and legally possible, protect and maintain the affordable housing provided to the residents of the City of Rohnert Park by mobile home parks in Rohnert Park.

If this ordinance is not in effect within one hundred and twenty days of the adoption of the General Plan, this Program 10.3 shall be of no further force and effect.

Responsibility: Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: August 1, 2000 – November 30, 2000

10.4 Work to ensure the ongoing affordability of the Country Club Village apartments, whose income restrictions are set to expire in May 2001, by, in part, contacting the entities interested in participating in the First Right of Refusal program and the Sonoma County Housing Authority.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff, CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: Beginning July 2000

HO-11 Ensure the long-term affordability of units developed or provided with city assistance.

Programs

11.1 Impose resale or rent controls on all units that receive city financial assistance or state housing density bonuses for not less than 30 years.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as projects are approved

11.2 Impose long-term re-sale or rental controls on affordable units provided through the inclusionary housing program or city subsidies to ensure that they remain affordable to the targeted income groups.

Responsibility: Planning Commission and City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as projects are approved

11.3 Continue to record affordability covenants upon homes that receive silent second loans through the first-time homebuyers program.

Responsibility: Housing Staff, CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund, General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

11.4 Encourage and facilitate to the extent possible, participation by property owners in federal for-sale and rental housing assistance programs that maintain affordability for very low and low income residents.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff, CDCRP

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2000 – June 30, 2006

GOAL: HOUSING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

HO-E Promote housing opportunities for special needs groups.

POLICIES: HOUSING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

HO-12 Promote the provision of housing for persons with special needs.

Program

12.1 Consider deferring city fees for housing projects that meet special needs when necessary to improve the financial feasibility of such projects.

Responsibility: CDCRP, City Council

Funding Source: Redevelopment and General Funds

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

HO-13 Promote the provision of rental units for larger families.

Program

13.1 Require apartment projects that receive CDCRP funding to include units with more than two bedrooms.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff, City Council

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as projects are submitted

HO-14 Promote the provision of disabled-accessible units and housing for the disabled.

Programs

14.1 Give a high priority to projects that include disabled-accessible units when allocating CDCRP support and funding.

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as projects are submitted

14.2 Target households with disabled persons when promoting the CDCRP's rehabilitation program.

The program allows the financing of repairs and modifications that improve accessibility for disabled occupants.

Responsibility: Housing Staff

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: Throughout life of program

14.3 Support efforts to provide housing for mentally- or emotionally-disabled adults.

Responsibility: City Council, CDCRP

Funding Source: General and Redevelopment Funds

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

14.4 Install sidewalk access ramps in the oldest sections of the city to facilitate the mobility of the disabled (number of ramps installed in 2000: approximately 96). Apply for additional CDBG funding to install additional ramps.

Responsibility: City Council, CDCRP, Public Works Department

Funding Source: CDBG and Redevelopment Funds

Schedule: 2000 - 2002

HO-15 Promote housing for the elderly.

Programs

15.1 Amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit lower parking requirements for senior housing.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

15.2 Target elderly households when promoting the CDCRP's rehabilitation program.

The program allows the financing of repairs and modifications that improve accessibility for elderly occupants.

Responsibility: Housing Staff

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: Throughout life of the rehab program

HO-16 Prevent homelessness and support efforts to provide housing for the homeless.

Programs

16.1 Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow emergency and transitional shelters in appropriate districts by use permit to facilitate the provision of such shelters if responsible agencies determine they are needed in the city.

Potential shelter locations include the following sites that may become available after construction of the new city hall: former library, former city hall, and former finance office building, and any school sites determined to be surplus.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2001

16.2 Continue providing homeless prevention and support services by providing funding to Petaluma People Services, Homeless Prevention Group, or similar agencies. (Estimated households assisted: 618, estimated persons assisted: 2,112)

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund (FY 99-00: $51,250 to PPS, $10,000 to HPG)

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

16.3 Continue working with the Committee on the Shelterless to provide shared housing for families who would otherwise become homeless.

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

16.4. Provide information regarding homeless services to city employees who are likely to be in contact with those needing shelter. Direct employees to refer such persons as appropriate.

Responsibility: Specified City employees; City Manager

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

HO-17 Promote affordable and accessible housing for Sonoma State University students.

Program

17.1 Support the development of multi-family housing for university students on the E. Cotati Avenue/Bodway Parkway site.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Planning Commission

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: During review of a conditional use permit for student housing

GOAL: FAIR HOUSING

HO-F Promote housing opportunities for all people regardless of race, religion, disability, gender, marital status, ancestry or national origin.

POLICIES: FAIR HOUSING

HO-18 Discourage discriminatory housing practices.

Programs

18.1 Provide information about the Sonoma County Rental Information and Mediation Service and Fair Housing of Sonoma County to city employees who are likely to receive fair housing complaints. Direct employees to refer such persons as appropriate.

Responsibility: City employees specified by City Manager

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

18.2 Post information regarding local, state and federal fair housing programs in such public places as City Hall, Community Center, Senior Center, and the post office.

Responsibility: Housing Specialist

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: Within 3 months of Housing Element adoption

18.3 Continue to review the fair housing records and practices of agencies and firms during contract negotiations, and include provisions in contracts allowing city inspection of fair housing documentation.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

18.4 Continue to include fair housing practices among the items addressed by the CDCRP's auditor during annual visits to the sites of contracting agencies and firms. Conduct occasional site visits and program audits of agency contractors for fair housing and discrimination compliance.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

18.5 Continue to monitor the occupancy characteristics of housing projects targeted to lower-income households to ensure that minorities, families, and the disabled are fairly represented.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

18.6 Continue to monitor the racial and ethnic characteristics of loan recipients in city-supported projects and programs to promote equal representation and discourage discrimination or restrictions in housing choice.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

18.7 Continue to require contractors to file monthly or annual progress reports that include information on program beneficiaries. Review fair housing and discrimination compliance when these reports are examined.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

18.8 Continue to provide equitable public services throughout the City, including public transportation, crime prevention, police protection, street lighting, street cleaning, trash collection, recreational facilities and programs, and schools.

Responsibility: City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

18.9 Continue to publicize openings on city boards and commissions through several newspapers.

Responsibility: City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

18.10 Continue to ensure that an over-concentration of lower-income housing does not occur in neighborhoods.

Responsibility: Planning Department, Planning Commission, City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006; as projects are reviewed

18.11 Contact Fair Housing of Sonoma County to inform them of possible rental discrimination against students, and request an investigation of its existence, followed by possible remediation.

Responsibility: Housing Specialist

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: Within three months of Housing Element adoption

GOAL: PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF HOUSING STOCK

HO-G Preserve and improve the City's existing housing stock.

POLICIES: PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF HOUSING STOCK

HO-19 Promote the maintenance of the existing housing stock.

Programs

19.1 Continue administering the adopted housing rehabilitation program, seeking to rehabilitate as many units as possible. (Potential households assisted: 14)

In October 1999, the redevelopment agency approved a $675,000 owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program. The program provides deferred, ten-year loans of up to $15,000 to mobile home owners and 15-year loans of up to $35,000 to conventional homeowners with incomes of less than 120% of area median income. The loans would be forgiven after 10 years for households with incomes of less than 80% of area median income. The program's priority is making moderate-quality improvements necessary to assure that the homes meet code requirements and basic housing quality standards.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff, Sonoma County Housing Authority

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund ($675,000)

Schedule: Beginning in 2000 until funds are exhausted

19.2 Expand the housing rehabilitation program to low-income households outside of the redevelopment project area. (Potential households assisted: 8)

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Sources: CDBG Funds ($150,000)

Redevelopment Funds ($37,500 matching funds)

Schedule: 2001 - 2002

19.3 Coordinate a Christmas in April program in Rohnert Park, focusing on lower-income households, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities. (Total households assisted in 2000: seven, including five elderly households, one city-owned home provided to Committee on the Shelterless, and one home of a 55-year old disabled woman with severe arthritis.)

Using community volunteers, this program rehabilitates homes to provide warmth, safety, and security. Typical repairs include fixing leaky roofs, building wheelchair ramps, electrical rewiring, repairing plumbing, installing new furnaces and hot water heaters, installing smoke detectors, replacing doors and windows, landscaping, and painting.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund ($20,000)

Schedule: April 15, 2000

HO-20 Work towards improving living conditions in the Canon Manor area.

Program

20.1 Continue to work with Canon Manor residents and property owners to establish an assessment district to pay for adequate water supply, wastewater disposal, and circulation systems.

Responsibility: Public Works Department

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

HO-21 Maintain the Sonoma Grove Trailer Park as a form of shelter for very low-income students and households that, in nearly every case, could not afford other housing available in Rohnert Park

Program

21.1 Consider requests by the trailer park owner for the funding of appropriate projects that would maintain the park.

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

HO-22 Minimize the extent of potential earthquake damage to housing.

Programs

22.1 Encourage owners of wood-frame homes to ensure that they are adequately secured to foundations and have adequate bracing by providing guidelines and sample plans at the Building Department.

Responsibility: Building Official

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: Within three months of Housing Element approval

22.2 Inform owners of multi-family housing whose structures may be highly susceptible to seismic damage, and help owners obtain financing for retrofitting.

Responsibility: Building Official, CDCRP

Funding Source: General and Redevelopment Funds

Schedule: Inform owners within three months of Housing Element approval

Assistance with financing: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

22.3 Include information about the need for residential seismic retrofitting and retrofitting methods in the city's communications with residents. Publicize Fannie Mae's Project Impact Disaster Prevention Loan Program.

The Project Impact Disaster Prevention Loan Program is intended to help Bay Area residents guard their homes against future natural disasters. The program has a quick approval process and ensures that work is performed by certified contractors who are qualified to make disaster-resistant improvements. Unsecured, fixed-rate loans of up to $15,000 are available and may be paid off in up to ten years. There are no income limitations for borrowers.

Responsibility: City Manager's Office

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: Within three months of Housing Element approval; on an intermittent basis thereafter

22.4 Consider funding and implementing another mobilehome bracing program.

A previous bracing program reinforced more than 474 of the city's mobilehomes.

Responsibility: CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: Consider during preparation of FY 2000-2001 CDCRP budget

HO-23 Use the provisions of California Community Redevelopment Law to ensure that a share of housing units that are rehabilitated are affordable to lower-income households.

Programs

23.1 Continue to ensure that at least 30 percent of all dwelling units substantially rehabilitated by the CDCRP are affordable to low- or moderate-income households, and that not less than 50 percent of these are affordable to very low-income households. Ensure that at least 15 percent of all dwelling units substantially rehabilitated in the redevelopment project area by public or private entities or persons other than the agency are affordable to low- or moderate-income households, and that not less than 40 percent of these are affordable to very low-income households.

These requirements are consistent with California Community Redevelopment Law. They may also be satisfied by several alternative methods.

Responsibility: City Manager, City Council, CDCRP

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006

GOAL: ENERGY CONSERVATION

HO-H Encourage energy conservation in housing.

POLICY: ENERGY CONSERVATION

HO-24 Promote the use of energy conservation features in the design of residential development.

Programs

24.1. Continue to evaluate residential projects for consistency with Section 66473.1 (Energy Conservation) of the Subdivision Map Act during the development review process.

Responsibility: Planning Staff

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as projects are submitted

24.2 Continue to require the planting of trees as part of residential projects to provide cooling during the summer months.

Responsibility: Planning Director, Public Works Director

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006, as projects are submitted

HO-25 Promote energy conservation in the city's older homes.

Programs

25.1 Encourage participants in the CDCRP's rehabilitation program to include energy conservation measures, such as insulation and weatherstripping, in their improvements.

Responsibility: City Housing Staff, SCCDC

Funding Source: Redevelopment Fund

Schedule: Beginning in 2000 until funds are exhausted

GOAL: ATTAINMENT OF HOUSING GOALS

HO-I Maximize attainment of the Housing Element's goals and programs.

POLICY: ATTAINMENT OF HOUSING GOALS

HO-26 Provide an active leadership role in fulfilling the programs of the Housing Element.

Program

26.1 Follow through on the actions and programs prescribed in the Housing Element in a timely manner and monitor progress annually.

Responsibility: As designated by program; Planning Director responsible for preparation of annual monitoring report

Funding Source: As designated by program; General Fund

Schedule: July 26, 2000 - June 30, 2006; annual progress report by July 1st

26.2 Provide information to the city's staff and decision makers about the characteristics of affordable housing, high-density development, and lower-income families so that they can act in an informed manner and education the community.

Provide such resources as "Myths and Facts About Affordable and High-Density Housing" (California Planning Roundtable), "The Effects of Subsidized and Affordable Housing on Property Values: A Survey of Research (HCD), "Every Community Needs Good Multi-Family Housing" (NAHB), "Growing Smarter with Apartments (NMHC), and videos that show exemplary high-density housing designs and feature interviews with project residents and neighbors.

Responsibility: City Manager, Planning Director

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: Within 6 months of Housing Element adoption

HO-27 Use the growth management program to promote the city's housing program.

Program

27.1 As part of any allocation criteria related to implementation of the city's growth management ordinance, give priority to projects that address the housing needs identified in this element and further the city's housing program.

Responsibility: City Council

Funding Source: General Fund

Schedule: July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2006

QUANTIFIED OBJECTIVES

The following table summarizes the City's quantified objectives for the period of January 1, 1999 to July 1, 2006. These objectives represent a reasonable expectation of the maximum number of new housing units that could be constructed, rehabilitated, and conserved during the planning period, based on the housing opportunities described in Section 9.4 and the policies and programs outlined in Section 9.5.

Table 9.5-1
Quantified Objectives for Housing; January 1, 1999 – July 1, 2006

	Income Group				
	V. Low	Low	Moderate	Above-Moderate	Totals
New Construction					
Honeybrook II (1999)				26	26 SF units
Rohnert Pk. West (1999)				41	41 SF units
Muirfield Apts. (1999)	24				24 MF units
Mountain Shadows Apts.			176		176 MF units
1309 Maurice Avenue		7			7 MF units
City Center	34	23	123		180 MF units
Southwest Blvd. Center	4	4	42		50 MF units
6025 Commerce Blvd.	3	3	34		40 MF units
6920 Commerce Blvd.	2	2	26		30 MF units
1400 E. Cotati Avenue	2	2	18		22 MF units
Specific Plan Areas	52	100	506	506	1,164 MF/SF units*
Totals	121	141	925	573	**1,760 units**
Rehabilitated Units					
CDCRP Rehab Program					
• Inside project area		7	7		14 households
• Outside project area		8			8 households
Christmas in April	7				7 households
Totals	7	15	7		**29 households**
Conserved Affordable Units					
Enforcement of Chap. 9.70		733	733		1,466 units
Country Club Village	41	22			63 units
Totals	41	755	733		**1,529 units**

*assumes 225 market-rate units per year, divided between above-moderate and moderate income, plus 15% inclusionary units

APPENDIX A
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1995 HOUSING ELEMENT

A review and evaluation of the previous housing element is useful in determining whether programs have been implemented, which programs have been effective in addressing the community's housing needs, and where further work is needed.

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION

The 1995 Housing Element's programs were carried out between January 1, 1995 and December 31, 1998. During that time, the City was successful in implementing many of its objectives, policies, and actions. Most notably the City or CDCRP has:

- **Prevented homelessness for at least 350 families and 1,150 individuals** through its support of a number of homeless prevention agencies. More than $613,535 was spent to provide grants and loans to those at imminent risk of becoming homeless, provide emergency shelter to those already homeless, and purchase housing for single-parent families who would otherwise be homeless.

- **Increased the supply of land available for residential development** by amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow such development in commercial and most industrial zoning districts through a conditional use permit, and by rezoning two sites to a multi-family residential district to facilitate the development of apartments.

- **Promoted the construction of affordable housing** by approving a conditional use permit application for 20 units targeted to lower-income households on a commercially-zoned site, including four density-bonus units.

- **Assisted in the construction of 20 very low-income units and 233 low-income units** by providing low-interest loans and facilitating other types of funding.

- **Guaranteed the long-term affordability of many units** by arranging financing, applying loan conditions, and enabling mobile home park residents to purchase their park.

- **Ensured the structural integrity of over 474 mobilehomes** by installing earthquake-resistant bracing systems.

- **Initiated a owner-occupied rehabilitation program** with $675,000 in deferred low-interest loans for home improvements that correct code violations and address basic housing quality standards.

- **Assisted 72 households in purchasing a home**, including eight first-time buyers, through Mortgage Credit Certificates and deferred, interest-free downpayment loans.

- **Enabled the construction of 24 apartments for developmentally-disabled adults** by providing $292,000 in low-interest loans.

Several of the 1995 Element's programs were not implemented. Reasons for the lack of implementation include:

- **Adoption of Measure N** – In 1996, a measure was approved by the public that established an urban boundary that was nearly contiguous with the city limits. This action limited the amount of residentially-developable land and residential construction opportunities. Although the measure had an exemption for boundary adjustments for affordable housing, no proposals were received for the area outside of the city limits.

- **Initiation of the 1997 General Plan update** – Closely following adoption of the 1995 Housing Element, the Council initiated another General Plan update, and some actions were deferred until its completion.

- **Unclear identification of implementation responsibilities** – Program actions did not identify the person or group responsible for their implementation, and there was a lack of follow-through.

DETAILED EVALUATION OF 1995 ELEMENT

The following section summarizes pertinent objectives, policies, and actions from the 1995 Housing Element, and identifies the successes and inadequacies of the City's housing program between January 1, 1995 and December 31, 1998 (referred to as "the reporting period"). Related objectives, policies, and actions are grouped together.

Prevention of Homelessness

Objective 1. Assure that 15 households at risk do not become homeless each year from 1995 to 1997.

Policy 8. The community should use as many outside resources as possible to confront homelessness.

Action 17. The City or Community Development Commission should provide approximately $5,000 per year through 1995 for homeless prevention programs that function in the Rohnert Park area.

The Community Development Commission of Rohnert Park (CDCRP) used many different agencies during the reporting period to prevent homelessness from occurring. Specifically, the City took the following actions:

- Contributed $201,325 to Petaluma People Services, which provides one-time assistance with rental deposits and monthly rents or mortgage payments for those at risk of becoming homeless. The recipients do not repay these funds. Approximately 340 Rohnert Park households were assisted through this program during the reporting period.

- Contributed $15,000 to the Homeless Prevention Group, which provides one-time, interest-free loans to low-income households with adequate and stable sources of income who need assistance in emergency situations to prevent eviction from an established residence or have

not accumulated enough funds to pay initial rental moving/move-in costs. Preference is given to households with dependents, elderly members or disabled members.

- Made a $5,500 grant to the Armory Shelter Program in Santa Rosa.
- Between 1995 and 1997, contributed $15,700 to the Interfaith Shelter Network, which operates the Armory Shelter Program in Santa Rosa that provides emergency night-time shelter for homeless adults during the winter months. The number of program clients who gave their place of residence as Rohnert Park ranged from 7 to 32 annually.
- Through an agreement with Committee on the Shelterless (COTS), supported the establishment of three four-bedroom/two-bath homes in Rohnert Park at a cost of $376,010 to provide housing for single-parent families who would otherwise become homeless. Up to four families share each house. COTS screens all applicants carefully before occupancy and provides living skills training and counseling.

Action 28. Maintain the Sonoma Grove Trailer Park as an innovative low cost form of shelter for low-income students and households that, in nearly every case, could not afford other housing available in Rohnert Park.

Sonoma Grove Trailer Park has been maintained as an alternative form of low cost housing.

Availability of Development Sites

Objective 6. Identify and evaluate sites needed to address the anticipated ABAG housing share allocations from 1995-1997.

After adoption of the 1995 General Plan, the City Council initiated a new General Plan update program and established a citizen's committee. The committee proposed residential construction in areas outside the city limits. However, in 1996, city voters approved Measure N, which established an urban boundary that was essentially the same as the city limits with the exception of a commercial/industrial area and a middle school site. This action severely limited the amount of residentially-developable land and residential construction opportunities.

Although Measure N effectively prohibited housing construction outside the urban boundary, it allowed an exception to add land for development that primarily consisted of housing necessary for the city to meet its fair share of regional housing need, and it was not feasible to accommodate the development within the urban boundary. However, no proposals were received for the development of affordable housing outside of the urban boundary.

Objective 3. By August 31, 1995, amend the zoning ordinance to allow all types of residential units in all commercial [districts] so as to provide sites appropriately approved for construction of units affordable to very low-income households and low-income households.

Action 19. By June 30, 1995, the Planning Commission and City Council will consider an amendment to the City zoning ordinance authorizing Multi-family Housing in commercial and industrial zoning district with approval of a special use permit. The ordinance

amendment will establish the standards and regulations that apply to multi-family development on such parcels. The standards and regulations will be similar to those that apply to parcels in the R-M:2000:PD district, which would allow a maximum of 21.8 units per acre.

In 1996, the City Council and Planning Commission amended the Zoning Ordinance to allow multi-family development within all commercial and industrial zoning districts (except the General Industrial District) with the approval of a conditional use permit, subject to the regulations of the R-M:2000 Multi-Family Residential District. However, the amendments did not limit multi-family development to affordable units, as envisioned by Objective 3.

Action 20. By June 30, 1996, the Planning Commission and City Council will notify property owners and surrounding property owners, hold public hearings, and consider designating [commercially- and industrially-zoned] parcels for Multifamily Housing development:

The City rezoned two Laguna Drive sites from commercial to RM:1500 to accommodate the development of 44 apartments.

Two State Farm Drive sites and the property at 5580 Snyder Lane were developed with commercial uses and were not available for residential development.

The Snyder Lane site adjacent to the Community Center, and the Southwest Shopping Center have not been reviewed for possible re-designation.

Action 21. By June 30, 1996, the Planning Commission and City Council will notify property owners and surrounding residents, hold public hearings, and consider changing the zoning classification of 1245 Hagemann Lane from R-1:40,000 Single Family to R-M:2000:PD, Multi-Family, a 10.00 acre parcel.

The City received an application for a 20-unit, single-family home project on the 10 acres at 1245 Hagemann Lane and the site was rezoned from R-1:40,000 Single Family to R-1:7,000.

Action 22. From the present through 1996 and according to established procedures and standards, the Planning Commission and City Council will consider use permit applications for multi-family projects on the following parcels located in the PA:PD, Professional Administrative District:

420 City Hall Drive
5210 Country Club Drive

Use permit applications for multi-family projects were not received for either of these sites. The City Hall Drive site was developed with an office building in 1999. The Country Club Drive site is still vacant.

New Construction of Affordable Housing

Objective 2. Construct 676 rental and owner-occupied units during the period 1995 to 1997. The number of units affordable to very low-income households would be 478 units; low-income households would be 198 units.

Permits for the construction of 483 housing units were issued by the City during 1995, 1996, and 1997. Twenty of these units were affordable to very low-income households and 233 units were affordable to low-income households.

During the entire reporting period of 1995-1999, permits were issued for:

- 20 very low-income units
- 233 low-income units
- 351 above moderate-income units

Policy 11. Affordability guarantees such as silent seconds, covenants, and contract provisions should be instituted when deemed appropriate in conjunction with a specific affordable housing project or program.

The affordability of all housing projects assisted by city funds during the reporting period was guaranteed. Specific provisions follow:

- The affordability of all 8 very low-income apartments and 12 low-income apartments at The Gardens is guaranteed until 2023.
- The affordability of 67 low-income units at Edgewood Apartments is guaranteed until 2011.
- The affordability of 60 low-income spaces at Rancho Feliz Mobilehome Park is guaranteed until 2018.

Action 3. The voters of Rohnert Park defeated a proposition of Article 34 in 1994 for the Community Development Commission to assist with the construction of a specified number of housing units affordable to low income households. The City Council is considering this proposition for the ballot in the future for voter approval.

The City did not consider another attempt at receiving Article 34 approval, which allows the City to develop, construct, or acquire low-income housing using state or federal funds, due to a prohibition against the City campaigning for such a measure and a lack of sponsorship by another agency or group. However, the lack of Article 34 authority is not seen as a major hindrance in assisting in the development of affordable housing because the City may still subsidize such housing by contributing funds to non-profit entities.

Action 23. In any given year as resources allow, the Community Development Commission will offer funds, at better than market terms, for multi-family projects that provide housing affordable to very low, low-income and moderate income households. In exchange for

providing funds, the Agency agreement will stipulate that units will remain available at affordable rents for at least 15 years.

Action 26. In 1995, construction commenced on a 30-unit project at 120 Santa Alicia. The CDC will make available at least $260,000 for the project. The Agency agreement will stipulate that units will remain affordable to very low income households for at least 30 years.

Action 27. The City or Community Development Commission would pursue development of new affordable rental projects after 1995.

- CDCRP loaned $292,000 to North Bay Rehabilitation Services at a below-market interest rate for the construction of 24 apartments for developmentally-disabled persons at 305 Laguna Drive. The terms of the loan include a requirement that 10 units be occupied by very low-income persons and the remainder occupied by low- or moderate-income persons for a period of at least 40 years. All of the units are actually provided at very low-income affordability levels through the use of the Section 8 rental assistance program.

- A for-profit corporation constructed 168 one-bedroom apartments (Edgewood Apartments) at 325 Laguna Drive in 1995. The City authorized federal tax credit financing for the project and entered into a loan agreement with the owner for payment of building fees. As a condition of its involvement, the City required the affordability of 67 low-income units to be guaranteed until 2011.

- CDCRP loaned $260,000 to The Gardens project at 120 Santa Alicia Drive at a 3% interest rate, with all payments deferred for 30 years. The affordability of the 8 very low-income units and 12 low-income units is guaranteed until 2023.

Action 42. After 1995, the City and/or Community Development Commission, working with a nonprofit housing development corporation, should endeavor to create a mobile home subdivision.

There has not been progress on this action item during the reporting period due to a lack of available sites.

Assistance for Ownership Housing

Action 36. The Community Development Commission will implement a Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) program.

Between 1995 and 1998, 64 Rohnert Park households participated in the MCC program, including 13 lower-income households.

Additionally, CDCRP established the First-Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance Program in 1995 to help lower-income households purchase a home. The deferred, interest-free loans are forgivable after a 10-year residency period, and up to $16,000 could be borrowed to cover the downpayment and closing costs. During 1995, $126,300 was expended to assist eight first-time homebuyers, including one low-income household and seven moderate-income households.

In 1998, CDCRP committed $400,000 more to the program, with the hopes that 27 or more homebuyers could be assisted. Up to $15,000 may be loaned to low-income households and $10,000 to households earning up to 100% of area median income. At least 25% of the households assisted by the program must be at or below 80% of area median income. Priority is also given to households that could not purchase a home, but for the downpayment assistance, and to households with a member that currently lives and/or works in Rohnert Park.

Action 35. The Community Development Commission will assist with the purchase of up to 20 condominiums at the Windsong complex in "M" Section by low and moderate-income households. Assistance will be provided through silent second financing commencing in 1993 and continuing approximately three years.

Due to the availability of purchase assistance through other agencies, the City decided its assistance was not needed in this effort.

Maintenance of Affordability

Objective 5. Conserve 196 existing assisted housing units from the present through 1999. Maintain 27 of these units as affordable to very low-income households, 15 of these units as affordable to low income households, and 154 affordable to moderate-income households. [refers to Americana and Crossbrook projects]

Action 4. The City and the Community Development Commission should endeavor to maintain existing housing affordable to low and very low-income households [in the Americana and Crossbrook apartment projects].

In 1995 Bay Apartment Communities, Inc. purchased Crossbrook Apartments. With the assistance of the City, Bay Apartment Communities obtained 30-year revenue bond financing for the purchase. The financing contains provisions that some of the units be rented to low- or moderate-income tenants.

Representatives of the City contacted the owner of Americana Apartments in 1994 to discuss the mortgage revenue bonds that were set to expire in 1995 for 20 low-income and 80 moderate-income units. Several options were explored to finance the project and retain the affordable units. City officials attempted to bring together the owner and possible buyers of Americana Apartments. The owner decided to not sell the project, to refinance with private financing, and discontinue the reservation of affordable units.

Action 16. Continue review of proposed conversions of apartments to condominiums and cooperatives. Approval of conversions should be contingent upon a rental unit vacancy rate that exceeds five percent.

The City continues to be committed to reviewing proposed conversions of apartments to condominiums and cooperatives. Since adoption of the Housing Element, no such conversions were proposed. In some instances, units approved as condominiums were rented. After an interim period, these units were sold as condominiums.

Action 41. By the end of 1997, the City and/or Community Development Commission should try to help the residents of at least one mobile home park purchase their park.

The City assisted the residents of Rancho Feliz Mobile Home Park. City staff negotiated with the private owner of the park, formulated financing, and arranged for the purchase of the park. The City and CDCRP formed a Housing Financing Authority to issue revenue bonds, purchase the park in 1995, and to continue to operate the park. Two residents serve on the governing board of the Authority. The Authority has maintained space rents and made several capital improvements in the park. At a future date when the bonds can be refinanced or are paid off, the Authority will transfer ownership of the park to a resident's association.

Growth Management

Action 1. The City should update its growth management policies as follows so the City can continue to reasonably link the pace of growth with the provision of necessary services and facilities while accommodating its regional share of housing affordable to very low, low and moderate income households.

The City did not take pursue an update of its growth management policies because the adoption of Measure N had a practical effect of limiting development.

Codes and Standards

Action 2. The City should review building codes and subdivision design standards and identify changes that could increase development densities, increase energy efficiency, and/or reduce per unit housing construction costs by the end of 1995.

This action was not implemented.

Action 6. In 1996, the Planning Commission will prepare recommendations regarding granting waivers and variances from impact fees and development standards in exchange for a firm written agreement to reserve housing units affordable to very low and low-income households. The City Council will review the Planning Commission recommendations and consider adoption of one or more ordinances that implement the recommendations by the end of 1995.

This action was not implemented.

Infrastructure Capacity

Action 8. From 1992 through 1998, the City will attempt to secure wastewater treatment capacity from Subregional Sewage System participants with unused and uncommitted allocations.

The City executed an agreement with Santa Rosa to secure unused wastewater treatment capacity, as long as the plant does not exceed its state-rated capacity

Action 9. The City will continue to use treated wastewater to irrigate lands in the Rohnert Park area including the City owned Mountain Shadows Golf Courses. The City, in cooperation with the Subregional Sewage System, will install a west to east pipeline

generally along Copeland Creek so as to make available treated wastewater for irrigation of publicly and privately owned properties.

The City has continued to use treated wastewater to irrigate publicly-owned lands, including the golf course. The subregional wastewater system has installed a reclaimed wastewater pipeline generally along Copeland Creek including branch lines. This wastewater is used to irrigate public parks, private landscaping, school grounds, and areas at Sonoma State University. The pipeline was activated in 1996.

Action 10. The City will support expansion of the Subregional Sewage System wastewater treatment capacity by 1998 so as to increase the wastewater treatment allocation for Rohnert Park sufficient to serve its fair share of housing units.

The City has supported the efforts to add capacity to the wastewater treatment system through the proposed Geysers Recharge Project. In the interim, a new storage pond has been completed to expand treatment capacity at the wastewater treatment plant, and is awaiting Regional Water Quality Control Board approval.

Action 11. Upon adoption of this Housing Element, the City will provide a copy to the Subregional Sewage System and formally request an allocation of wastewater treatment capacity sufficient to serve the identified housing projects which meet Rohnert Park's need for housing affordable to very low and low-income households.

A copy of the adopted 1995 Housing Element was transmitted to the subregional system. The City requested wastewater treatment capacity sufficient to meet the needs for areas within the current City limits including identified housing projects. There has been sufficient treatment capacity to provide for affordable housing projects constructed since 1995.

Housing Maintenance and Rehabilitation

Objective 4. Rehabilitate 100 stick built and manufactured housing units during the period 1995 to 1997. Of the total number of units rehabilitated, 11 should be occupied by very low-income households, 36 should be occupied by low-income households, and 53 should be occupied by moderate-income households.

The CDCRP contracted with the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC) for door-to-door contact with mobilehome owners, and provided funds for the installation of mobilehome earthquake-resistant bracing systems (ERBS) in the three parks in the redevelopment area (Rancho Feliz, Rancho Verde and Las Casitas Mobile Home Parks). All families were low- to moderate-income households, with priority given to single-wide units and low-income households.

The City also obtained CDBG funds to provide ERBS in Rancho Grande and Valley Village Mobile Home Parks. The rehabilitation program ultimately provided grants in the amount of $362,140 to mobilehome owners for the installation of over 200 bracing systems by June, 1997.

Action 12. A nonprofit community organization should enroll in the Christmas in April program by the end of 1995.

Although this program was not implemented by 1996, it was implemented on April 15, 2000.

Action 40. By the end of 1995, the City and/or Community Development Commission should try to create a mobile home rent guarantee program.

No action was taken to implement a mobile home rent guarantee program. However, in 1995, CDCRP purchased the 297-unit Rancho Feliz Mobilehome Park and guaranteed the affordability of 131 low-income and 57 moderate-income mobilehomes. The CDCRP also pledged annual funds of $250,000 for a five-year period to be used for capital improvements within the park.

Monitoring

Action 13. On an annual basis, the Planning Commission will prepare a report to the City Council regarding the status and progress in implementing the housing element. Upon review by the City Council, a copy of the report will be submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development.

The Planning Commission did not prepare annual reports regarding implementation of the housing element.

Housing for Special Populations

Action 29. In 1995, a nonprofit corporation will construct up to 24 multifamily units at 305 Laguna Drive. The project will be designed to provide housing for persons with disabilities.

In 1996, CDCRP loaned North Bay Rehabilitation Services $292,000 at a below-market interest rate for pre-development costs and project development of 24 apartments for developmentally-disabled individuals. The loan was needed to secure an option on the property and cover costs that were not reimbursed through the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program that NVRS obtained. The loan's promissory note restricts at least 10 of the units to low-income persons, and provides that the Commission may assume ownership of the project upon expiration of the HUD contracts in 40 years.

The project was occupied in 1999 and provides low-cost, accessible housing close to public transportation, shopping, and medical facilities, as well as supportive services and employment enhancement opportunities to its residents.

Action 14. In cooperation with Sonoma State University, identify sites for development of student housing and anticipate such development after 1995.

Action 31. In 1996 the Planning Commission will conduct a survey of sites suitable for the development of student housing in the vicinity of Sonoma State University. The Planning Commission will prepare recommendations for the City Council regarding sphere of influence boundary changes, annexations, extension of public services, and site design.

Sonoma State University identified housing construction sites on campus. A student village housing units was constructed in 1999 and SSU is planning to construct more units by Fall 2002. Therefore, the City did not undertake a survey of suitable off-site housing sites in the vicinity of the campus.

Action 30. The City Attorney should determine whether a residential care facility could be constructed on the "hospital site" given the recorded covenant.

Action 33. The City will encourage the construction of a long-term care facility by the end of 1997.

The City has granted an option to a consortium of individuals interested in created a health care complex on the hospital site that may include a long-term care facility.

Action 32. The City will make available descriptions of equal housing opportunity laws, examples of housing discrimination, citizen responsibilities, and grievance procedures.

In 1995, the City mailed an information brochure regarding equal housing opportunity to every household in the community. The City has supported the annual use of Community Development Block Grant Funds to help finance the Sonoma County Rental Information & Mediation Services (SCRIMS) which addresses housing discrimination complaints. When individuals with housing discrimination complaints contact the City, they are advised to contact SCRIMS, the Sonoma County District Attorney's office, or the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing.

Jobs/Housing Balance

Policy 10. Achieving and maintaining a rough balance between jobs and housing is a city priority.

In 1999, there were approximately 23,332 jobs in the City of Rohnert Park, and 14,865 housing units, for a jobs/housing ratio of 1.57, according to the Association for Bay Area Governments. The ratio of jobs to employed residents was 1.04, according to Table 2.3-3 of the draft General Plan.

APPENDIX B
INVENTORY OF ASSISTED HOUSING

NAME & ADDRESS	TOTAL UNITS	ELDERLY FAMILY GROUP	VERY LOW	LOW	MOD	ABOVE MOD	TYPE OF ASSIST	EARLIEST YR AFFORDBILITY EXPIRES	COST OF REPLACE-MENT UNITS	COST OF PRESERVING UNITS
Aaron House 735 Bonnie Ave	1	Group	1	0	0	0	CDC HUD-202 HCD	2021	$200,000	$ 8,670
Altamont Apts. 300 Enterprise Dr.	230	Elderly	0	92	0	138	TAXC PRIV.	2017	16,790,000	$320,160
Country Club Village 6351 Country Club	**63**	**Elderly**	**41**	**22**	**0**	**0**	**HUD-C**	**2001**	**4,599,000**	**$432,030**
Crossbrook Apts. 655 Enterprise Dr.	226	Family	0	46	180	0	MRB	2025	16,498,000	$398,820
Shared Housing										
7668 Beverly Ave.	4	Family	4	0	0	0	CDC	Indefinite	200,000	$34,680
7982 Santa Barbara	4	Family	4	0	0	0	CDC	Indefinite	200,000	$34,680
746 Brett Avenue	4	Family	4	0	0	0	CDC	Indefinite	200,000	$34,680
Park Meadows Apts. 7425 Camino Colegio	61	Family	0	12	49	0	MRB	2014	4,453,000	$41,760
Tower Apartments 781 E. Cotati Ave.	50	Family	50	0	0	0	CDC TAXC CDBG HCD PRIV	2048	3,650,000	$433,500
Gardens Apartments 120 Santa Alicia	21	Family	21	0	0	0	CDC TAXC CDBG HCD PRIV	2025	1,533,000	$403,800
Muirfield Apartments 712-758 Laguna Dr.	24	Disabled	24	0	0	0	CDC HUD	2039	1,752,000	$461,000

Footnotes

[1] *The State of California's Housing Markets, 1990 – 1997, Statewide Housing Plan Update Phase II*, Institute for Urban and Regional Development University of California Berkeley, 1999.

[2] Remarks by Cathy Creswell, HCD Acting Deputy Executive Director, and Linda Wheaton, HCD Housing Specialist, to ABAG Housing Methodology Committee, April 2, 1999.

[3] Ron Bellavia, California Department of Housing and Community Development

[4] The Press Democrat, Real Estate section

[5] "Shaken Awake!, " Association of Bay Area Governments, 1996.

[6] Paul Smith, Acting Chief, HUD San Francisco Branch

[7] Wendy Vazquez, Bilingual Housing Counselor, Fair Housing of Sonoma County

[8] "Discrimination Against Families with Children in Rental Housing," Fair Housing of Sonoma County, January 2000

[9] Realfacts, The Press Democrat, October 25, 1999.

[10] "What We Know About Mortgage Lending Discrimination in America," U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

[11] "Homes Sales Boom Continues," The Press Democrat, December 23, 1999.

[12] *The State of California's Housing Markets, 1990 – 1997, Statewide Housing Plan Update Phase II*, Institute for Urban and Regional Development University of California Berkeley, 1999.

[13] California Association of Realtors

[14] *Housing Opportunity Index: Fourth Quarter 1999*, National Association of Home Builders, April 2000

[15] "Bay Area Inflation Stays Ahead of U.S.," The Press Democrat, January 3, 2000

[16] Median Home Prices for Selected California Cities and Areas, California Assn. of Realtors, October 1999.

[17] "Sonoma County Home Prices Soar," The Press Democrat, August 8, 1999

[19] Realfacts, The Press Democrat, November 17, 1999

[20] Sonoma County Consolidated Plan 2000 (Draft II), Sonoma Co. Community Development Commission

[21] "Out of Reach," National Low Income Housing Coalition, September 1999

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[22] Sonoma County Advocacy Group, 1999

[23] Sonoma County Community Development Commission, *Consolidated Plan 1997/2000.*

[24] Paul Carroll, Sonoma County Housing Authority, November 1999

[25] "Housing Options for Older Americans" Fact Sheet, Administration on Aging

[26] *Sonoma County Consolidated Plan, Draft II*, Sonoma Co. Community Development Commission, May 2000

[27] *Fair Housing Planning Guide*, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

[28] *1994 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Application for The Gardens,* Burbank Housing Development Corp.

[29] Sonoma County Community Development Commission, *Consolidated Plan 1997/2000.*

[30] Federal definition of a homeless person per the McKinney Act (1987)

[31] *Sonoma Co. Consolidated Plan 2000, Draft II,* Sonoma Co. Community Development Comsn., May 2000

[32] *Homeless in America: A Children's Story*, Institute for Children and Poverty and Homes for the Homeless.

[33] *The State of California's Housing Markets, 1990 – 1997, Statewide Housing Plan Update Phase II*, Institute for Urban and Regional Development University of California Berkeley, 1999.

[34] *The State of California's Housing Markets, 1990 – 1997, Statewide Housing Plan Update Phase II*, Institute for Urban and Regional Development University of California Berkeley, 1999.

[35] Tim Tiemens, Sonoma State University, December 1999.

[36] *Sonoma State University Master Plan Revision Draft EIR*, 1999.

[37] Tim Tiemens, Sonoma State University, December 1999.

[39] Government Code Section 65863.10.

[40] *Residential Cost Handbook*, 1990.

[41] National Association of Home Builders

[42] "Lumber Cost Stings Home Buyers," The Press Democrat, July 8, 1999.

[43] Random Lengths

[44] National Association of Home Builders.

[45] "New Home Construction Falls Behind," The Press Democrat, January 30, 2000

[46] 1988 California Statewide Housing Plan

[47] "'Renter By Choice' Households Growing," Professional Builder, January 1, 2000

[49] Mortgage Market Information Services, June 30, 2000

[51] CDBG Program Application for First Time Home Buyer Program, 2000.

[52] GM-9 through GM-12

[53] Rohnert Park General Plan Revised Draft EIR, Section 4.10, May 2000

[54] News Release, Fannie Mae, June 1, 1999

Glossary of Terms

100-Year Flood. That flood event that has a one-percent chance of occurrence in any one year.

Acre, Gross. Area of a site calculated to the centerline of bounding streets and other public rights-of-way.

Acre, Net. The portion of a site that can actually be built upon. Not included in the net acreage of a site are public or private road rights-of-way, public open space, and flood ways.

Ambient Conditions. Initial background concentration sensed/measured at a monitoring/sampling site, as in air quality or noise.

Aquifer. A natural underground formation that is saturated with water, and from which water can be withdrawn.

Arterial. A street whose primary function is to carry high-speed through-traffic in a continuous route across an area.

Attainment Area. An area determined to have met federal or State air quality standards, as defined in the federal Clean Air Act or the California Clean Air Act. An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a non-attainment area for others.

Auto-oriented Uses. Land uses designed to accommodate customers who use autos to travel to the site, including automobile sales and service, building supplies and materials and drive-up or drive-through uses.

Bike Lanes (Class II facilities). Lanes on the outside edge of roadways reserved for the exclusive use of bicycles, so designated with special signing and pavement markings.

Buildout. That level of development characterized by full occupancy of all developable sites in accordance with the General Plan; the maximum probable level of development envisioned by the General Plan under specified assumptions about densities and intensities. Buildout does not necessarily assume parcels are developed at maximum allowable intensities.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The multi-year scheduling of public physical improvements based on studies of fiscal resources available and the choice of specific improvements to be constructed.

Carbon Monoxide (CO). A colorless, odorless gas formed by the incomplete combustion of fuels, which is toxic because of its tendency to reduce the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood.

Collector. A street that connects arterials with local streets and provide access and circulation within neighborhoods.

Curb Cut. The opening along the curb line at which point vehicles or other wheeled forms of transportation may enter or leave the roadway. Curb cuts are essential at street corners for wheelchair users.

Day-Night Average Sound Level (Ldn). The A-weighted average sound level in decibels during a 24-hour period with a 10 dB weighing applied to nighttime sound levels (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.). This exposure method is similar to the CNEL, but deletes the additional weight given in that measurement to noise during the evening time period (7 p.m. to 10 p.m.).

Decibel (dB). A unit used to express the relative intensity of a sound as it is heard by the human ear. The decibel measuring scale is logarithmic. Zero (0 dB) on the scale is the lowest sound level that a normal ear can detect under very quiet ("laboratory") conditions and is referred to as the "threshold" of human hearing. On the logarithmic scale, 10 decibels are 10 times more intense, 20 decibels are 100 times more intense, and 30 decibels are 1,000 times more intense than 1 decibel.

Easement. A right given by the owner of land to another party for specific limited use of that land. An easement may be acquired by a government through dedication when the purchase of an entire interest in the property may be too expensive or unnecessary.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR). A document used to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a project, evaluate reasonable alternatives to the project, and identify mitigation measures necessary to minimize the impacts. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that the agency with primary responsibility over the approval of a project (the lead agency) evaluate the project's potential impacts in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Endangered Species, California. A native species or sub-species of a bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant, which is in serious danger of becoming extinct throughout all or a significant portion of its range, due to one or more factors, including loss in habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition, or disease. The status is determined by the State Department of Fish and Game together with the State Fish and Game Commission.

Endangered Species, Federal. A species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, other than the species of the Class Insect determined to constitute a pest whose protection under the provisions of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, as amended, would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to humans. The status is determined by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior.

Environmental Setting. The physical conditions in an area, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance, which will be affected by a proposed project. The area involved shall be the area in which signifi-

cant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The "environment" includes both natural and man-made conditions.

Equivalent Noise Level (Leq). A single-number representation of the fluctuating sound level in decibels over a specified period of time. It is a sound-energy average of the fluctuating level.

Erosion. The process by which material is removed from the earth's surface (including weathering, dissolution, abrasion, and transportation), most commonly by wind or water.

Fault. A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted. An active fault is a fault that has moved recently and which is likely to again. An inactive fault is a fault which shows no evidence of movement in recent geologic time and little potential for movement.

Floor Area, Gross. The total horizontal area in square feet of all floors within the exterior walls of a building, but not including the area of unroofed inner courts or shaft enclosures.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The ratio between gross floor area of structures on a site and gross site area. Thus, a building with a floor area of 100,000 square feet on a 50,000 square-foot lot will have a FAR of 2.0.

Groundwater. Water under the earth's surface, often confined to aquifers capable of supplying wells and springs.

Groundwater Recharge. The natural process of infiltration and percolation of rainwater from land areas or streams through permeable soils into water-holding rocks that provide underground storage (i.e. aquifers).

Habitat. The natural environment of a plant or animal.

Hazardous Material. A material or form of energy that could cause injury or illness to persons, livestock, or the natural environment.

Hazardous Waste. Waste which requires special handling to avoid illness or injury to persons or damage to property. Includes, but is not limited to, inorganic mineral acids of sulfur, fluorine, chlorine, nitrogen, chromium, phosphorous, selenium and arsenic and their common salts; lead, nickel, and mercury and their inorganic salts or metallo-organic derivatives; coal, tar acids such as phenol and cresols and their salts; and all radioactive materials.

Household. Person or persons living in one housing unit.

Housing Unit, Multifamily. Units with two or more housing units in one structure sharing a common floor/ceiling.

Housing Unit, Single-Family Attached. Single-family units that are attached to other units with adjoining walls extending from ground to roof that separate it from other adjoining structures and form a property line. Each unit has its own heating system.

Housing Unit, Single-Family Detached. Single-family units that are detached from any other house with open space on all four sides.

Hydrocarbons (HC). Gases emitted from incomplete combustion of gasoline and from evaporation of petroleum fuels, representing unburned and wasted fuel.

Impervious Surface. Any material which reduces or prevents absorption of water into land.

Infill. The development of new housing or other buildings on scattered vacant lots in a built-up area or on new building parcels created by permitted lot splits.

Infiltration. The introduction of underground water, such as groundwater, into wastewater collection systems. Infiltration results in increased wastewater flow levels.

Infrastructure. Permanent utility installations, including roads, water supply lines, sewage collection pipes, and power and communications lines.

Jobs-Employed Residents Balance. Total jobs divided by total employed residents (i.e. people who live in the area, but may work anywhere). A ratio of 1.0 typically indicates a balance. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a net in-commute; less than 1.0 indicates a net out-commute.

Jobs-Housing Balance. Total jobs divided by total housing units. A more appropriate measure is the jobs/employed resident ratio.

LAFCO. Local Agency Formation Commission of Sonoma County.

Less than Significant Impact. An impact that would not result in a substantial and adverse change in the environment and would not require mitigation.

Level of Service (LOS). A qualitative measure of the effect of traffic flow factors such as special travel time, interruptions, freedom to maneuver, driver comfort, and convenience, and indirectly, safety and operating cost. Levels of service are usually described by a letter rating system of A through F, with LOS A indicating stable traffic flow with little or no delays and LOS F indicating excessive delays and jammed traffic conditions.

Liquefaction. A sudden large decrease in the shearing resistance of a cohesionless soil, caused by a collapse of the structure by shock or strain, and associated with a sudden but temporary increase of the pore fluid pressure.

Mitigation Measure. Action taken to reduce or eliminate environmental impacts. Mitigation measures are required as a component of an environmental impact report (EIR) if significant impacts are identified.

Neighborhood Shopping Centers. A small retail center with up to 120,000 square feet of space on an 8-12 acre site serving a trading area population of 5,000 to 15,000. The principal tenant typically is a supermarket.

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2). A reddish brown gas that is a byproduct of the combustion process and is a key to the ozone production process.

Nitrogen Oxides (NOx). Chemical compounds containing nitrogen and oxygen; reacts with volatile organic compounds, in the presence of heat and sunlight to form ozone. It is also a major precursor to acid rain.

Ozone. A compound consisting of three oxygen atoms, that is the primary constituent of smog. It is formed through chemical reactions in the atmosphere involving volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, and sunlight. Ozone can initiate damage to the lungs as well as damage to trees, crops, and materials. There is a natural layer of ozone in the upper atmosphere, which shields the earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation.

PM-10. The current standard for measuring the amount of solid or liquid matter suspended in the atmosphere ("particulate matter including dust"). Refers to the amount of particulate matter over 10 micrometers in diameter. The smaller PM-10 particles penetrate to the deeper portions of the lung, affecting sensitive population groups such as children and people with respiratory diseases.

Peak Hour. The busiest one-hour period for traffic during a 24-hour period. The PM peak hour is the busiest one hour period of traffic during the evening commute period. The AM peak hour is the busiest one hour period during the morning commute.

Pedestrian-oriented Development. Development designed with an emphasis on the street sidewalk and on pedestrian access to the building, rather than an auto access and parking areas.

Point Source. A source of pollutants which may be traced to a discrete point of emission.

Precursor. A chemical compound that leads to the formation of a pollutant. Reactive organic gases and nitrogen oxides are precursors of photochemical oxidants.

Rare Species. A condition in which a species or subspecies, although not currently threatened with extinction, exists in such small numbers throughout its range that it may be endangered if the quality of its environment worsens.

Response Time. The amount of time for an emergency service response, measured from the time of the distress call until arrival on the scene.

Retention Area. A pond, pool, lagoon, or basin used for the storage of water runoff.

Richter Scale. A logarithmic scale developed in 1935/36 by Dr. Charles F. Richter and Dr. Beno Gutenberg to measure earthquake magnitude by the amount of energy released, as opposed to earthquake intensity as determined by local effects on people, structures, and earth materials.

Right-of-Way. A continuous strip of land reserved for or actually occupied by a road, crosswalk, railroad, electric transmission lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary storm sewer or other similar use.

Riparian. Pertaining to the bank of a natural course of water, whether seasonal or annual. Riparian habitat is defined by the surrounding vegetation or presence of known wildlife movement pathways; it borders or surrounds a waterway.

Sedimentation. Process by which material suspended in water is deposited in a body of water.

Sensitive Receptors. Persons or land users that are most sensitive to negative effects of air pollutants. Persons who are sensitive receptors include children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill. The term "sensitive receptors" can also refer to the land use categories where these people live or spend a significant amount of time. Such areas include residences, schools, playgrounds, child-care centers, hospitals, retirement homes, and convalescent homes.

Significant Impact. CEQA (§ 21068) defines a significant impact as that which has "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment." Mitigation measures are proposed, where feasible, to reduce the magnitude of significant impacts.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact. An impact that would result in a substantial adverse effect on the environment which would not be mitigable to a less-than-significant level. A project with such an impact could still proceed, provided the City prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations, pursuant to Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines, explaining why the City would proceed with the project despite the occurrence of such an impact.

Siltation. The process of silt deposition. Silt is a loose sedimentary material composed of finely divided particles of soil or rock, often carried in cloudy suspension in water.

Solid Waste. Unwanted or discarded material, including garbage, with insufficient liquid content to be free flowing.

Sphere of Influence (SOI). The ultimate service area of the City of Rohnert Park as established by Sonoma County LAFCO.

Stationary Source. A source of air pollution that is not mobile, such as a heating plant or an exhaust stack from a laboratory.

Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2). A heavy, pungent, colorless air pollutant formed primarily by the combustion of fossil fuels. It is a respiratory irritant, especially for asthmatics and is the major precursor to the formation of acid rain.

Threatened Species, California. A species of animal or plant is endangered when its survival and reproduction in the wild are in immediate jeopardy form one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition, disease, or other factors: or when although not presently threatened with extinction, the species is existing in such small numbers that it may become endangered if its environment worsens. A species of animal or plant shall be presumed to be rare or endangered as it is listed in: Sections 670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, California Code of Regulations; or Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations Sections 17.11 or 17.12 pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act as rare, threatened, or endangered.

Threatened Species, Federal. A species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Threshold of Significance. The established and identifiable quantitative, qualitative, or performance levels of environmental effect beyond which environmental impacts are considered to be significant. Thresholds of significance are based on current City policy and other normally-accepted standards for environmental review.

TOT. Transient Occupancy Tax. Levied on those staying in overnight facilities such as hotels, to help defray provision of City services related to the occupancy.

Trip Generation. The number of vehicle trip ends associated with (i.e., produced by) a particular land use or traffic study site. A trip end is defined as a single vehicle movement. Roundtrips consist of two trip ends.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM). Measures designed to reduce demand for automobile trips, typically focused on peak-periods.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM). Measures designed to reduce peak-period auto traffic by making a more efficient use of existing resources, and emphasizing transit, signal coordination, ridesharing, and non-automobile alternatives. TDM is a subset of TSM.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The line within which all urban development is to be contained.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). A measure of both the volume and extent of motor vehicle operation; the total number of vehicle miles traveled within a specified geographical area (whether the entire country or a smaller area) over a given period of time.

Viewshed. The geographic area visible from a fixed point.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). A group of chemicals that react in the atmosphere with nitrogen oxides in the presence of heat and sunlight to form ozone: does not include methane and other compounds determined by EPA to have negligible photochemical reactivity. Examples of VOCs include gasoline fumes and oil-based paints.

Volume-to-Capacity Ratio (V/C). In reference to public services or transportation, ratio of peak hour use to capacity.

Wetlands. An area at least periodically wet or flooded; where the water table stands at or above the land surface (bogs and marshes). Also those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

Wildlife Corridors. A natural corridor, such as an undeveloped ravine, that is frequently used by wildlife to travel from one area to another.

Williamson Act. Known formerly as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, it was designed as an incentive to retain prime agricultural land and open space in agricultural use, thereby slowing its conversion to urban and suburban development. The program entails a ten-year contract between the City or County and an owner of land, whereby the land is taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than its market value. The land becomes subject to certain enforceable restrictions, and certain conditions must be met prior to approval of an agreement.

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